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Issue #227 September 2022

TheVillage

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TheVillage Issue 227 September 2022

inside

Bringing you village life for 24 years

Orchid You Not!
Page 11

Medieval Merriement
Pages 16-17

The Anonymous Birder
Page 18

Parish Council News
Pages 27-30

GlastonBeoley
Pages 34-35

Rowney in Bloom
Page 45-47

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Cover: The sun sets behind the sunflower field at Beckett's Farm. Photo by Mark Easter, of Rowney Green

REFUSAL OF GREEN BELT AFFORDABLE HOMES PLAN CHALLENGED

Inspector called in

A PARISH council has won a Judicial Review into the approval of plans for 2,500 homes at Foxlydiate between Redditch and Tardebigge.

Bentley Pauncefoot Parish Council began legal proceedings against local planning authorities, Redditch and Bromsgrove, fearing the development could disrupt people's lives for many years to come.

A High Court judge has now granted permission for the council to proceed with the review. A date for the hearing is still to be advised.

Plans to build 15 affordable homes and three bungalows down a village lane will be considered by a government planning inspector.

A hearing has been scheduled for September 20 into the refusal for the plans on Ash Lane, Hopwood, by Bromsgrove District Council earlier this year.

The scheme faces a high level of opposition from villagers living along the lane. They warn that Ash Lane is already dangerous because it is narrow and without a footpath.

It was rejected by Bromsgrove planners in February as being inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt, going against the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan and national planning policy.

It was considered unsustainable because occupants would be reliant upon car travel and the site was outside the settlement boundaries of Hopwood.

Among the matters disputed by the applicants and likely to be considered by the planning inspector is where Hopwood's "settlement boundary" lies and whether Bromsgrove can meet its current need for affordable housing.

■ An outline application to build nine homes on a canal-side field at Withybed Green, Alvechurch, was refused by Bromsgrove in August as being harmful in the Green Belt. A similar application for the site off Withybed Lane was rejected last year.

Station lifts to get the go-ahead

BARNT Green station may at last be fitted with lifts to make all platforms accessible.

More than six years since the new footbridge was installed at the station, Barnt Green Parish Council is hoping to hear at its September meeting that the money has at last been allocated to carry out the work.

It is believed the Department for Transport his granted approval and that Network Rail is scheduling contractors to start work in early 2023.

A report is due to be given to the parish council's full meeting on September 19.

The parish council has fought hard to make sure the long-promised lifts are not forgotten. It is more than three years since a Network Rail application for cash under an Access for All scheme failed.

Young musicians relax at St Laurence Church, Alvechurch, after performing in the Midland Sinfonia's Showcase 2022. Picture/*Keith Woolford.*

A FIRE engine can be seen through the trees, parked on the 16th fairway of the Lickey Hills golf course, as firefighters battled a large wildfire on Rednal Hill.

Lickey rangers reiterated their plea to visitors never to light fires or barbecues in the hills after the fire in July, which sent palls of smoke over southern Birmingham.

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'Guess the film' at new cinema

Free village film screenings have been launched in Barnt Green – although cinema-goers might not know for sure what they are going to see until the lights go down.

But for most film fans, the enforced secrecy shouldn't be a problem because they will be able to work out the title from the provided synopsis.

The accidental film quiz is a result of the church licensing conditions Barnt Green Quakers have to adhere to in order to show films at the Meeting House.

A Quakers spokesman said: "This permits us to show a very wide range of films and videos as long as we do not advertise them in advance, or charge for admission."

He added: "The films will be a mixture of classics and favourites. When these films were first exhibited, many local cinemas were showing worn 35mm prints that had previously been around the American cinema circuits.

"The projectors were old and the sound systems often mono and dated from the 1930s.

"We are using remastered digital discs, so the experience is that of seeing and hearing the films as seen in the first-run city-centre theatres, as the directors intended."

There will be screenings every month until Christmas. The film showing on Saturday September 17, starting at 7pm prompt (no adverts) is described as: "One of the funniest send-ups of Roman Epics. It was so funny that Norway banned it – and it was condemned by the Archbishop of Canterbury and thousands of people - who had never watched it…"

(Anyone who can't work it out is welcome to email info@villageonline.co.uk and we'll tell you what we're pretty sure that one is.)

And everyone will know the Saturday 2pm matinee on December 17: "Popular musical shot on location in Austria featuring hills, nuns, singing children and a nanny."

The film showings on the months in between are at 7pm on October 22 and November 19. Free admission is described as an "introductory offer".

The Meeting House, in Sandhills Road, is fully accessible and there is a hearing aid loop connected to the cinema sound system.

The Midland Sinfonia's final concert of the season saw a packed St Laurence Church in Alvechurch. As part of The Bromsgrove Festival, the Sinfonia welcomed new and existing audience members to a varied programme of classical music and singing. Taking the applause (above) are guest conductor for the full orchestra Glynn Oxley and first violinist Shulah Olivera. Picture/*Keith Woolford.*

Road 'too dangerous' to monitor

PORTWAY residents in Beoley are lobbying county councillor Aled Luckman and the Police and Crime Commissioner to introduce speed calming measures on the Old Alcester Road through Portway.

They say the road has become a 'rat-run' from and back on to the A435 at commuter time, with motorists ignoring the 40mph speed limit.

When they asked the community speed watch co-ordinator for speed monitoring, they say they were told the road was too dangerous for volunteers to monitor speeding.

A spokesman told *The Village*: "Portway residents living on Old Alcester Road are dismayed the road is apparently unsafe for speed watch volunteers yet safe for them!"

Help floods in for Jack after clash

SPECTATORS at Alvechurch Football Club's first match of the season at home to Stourbridge FC witnessed a terrible clash of heads between home players Jack Hallahan and Harry Williams.

The club says Harry is on the mend but Jack suffered a broken eye socket and nose and lost some teeth in the incident. A GoFundMe page had already raised more than £5,000 to help Jack as *The Village* went to press – and Stourbridge FC's main sponsor Bhandal Dental Practice, had offered to carry out the work on his teeth.

Opening Day Drama: Page 55

Local Plan delay

BROMSGROVE District has delayed the next phase of the Local Plan review to focus on the infrastructure that will be needed to support any future development.

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ORCHID YOU NOT!

Left: The canalside where the pyramidal orchid was spotted.
Above: A close up of the surprise discovery.

Village wildlife enthusiasts found an orchid uncommon to this area flowering by a canal – and then saved it from being mown down.

It was first discovered between the towpath and hedgerow in Alvechurch by a member of Alvechurch Biodiversity Group, who showed it to others in the group.

The pyramidal orchid had come up in a place normally mown in spring, but this year it had been left alone.

Village nature writer Mary Green, who was leading the outing, contacted the Canal and River Trust with the precise location and asked if it could be not mown until the end of flowering.

Two days later on another group outing, they saw the mowers coming, but fortunately another group member staying on a narrowboat had run along the canal to ensure it was left.

"We did a little dance by the canal," said Mary.

"Goodness knows how long that orchid has been lurking underground with its mycorrhizal fungi."

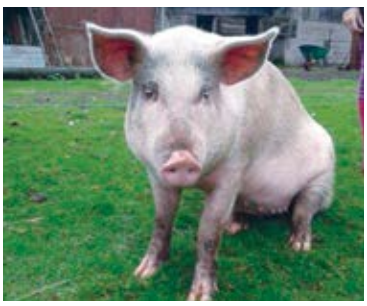
Biodiverse spring & summer: Page 26

Open day to help animal sanctuary

HILLFIELDS Animal Sanctuary in Greenhill, Blackwell, is holding an open afternoon to raise funds to keep up their good work.

The sanctuary began with just a few animals more than 40 years ago and is now home to more than 300, including horses, ponies, goats, sheep, ducks, geese, chickens, dogs, cats and pigs (like Doris, right).

Lynne Tudor, who runs Hillfields, hopes the open afternoon will make for an interesting family trip out to see the animals and bring in much-needed cash for her work. The sanctuary is open from 2pm-4pm on Sunday September 18th. Entry is £5 for adults and £3 for children.



See www.hillfieldsanimalsanctuary.org.uk for address details and ways to help.

Trust fund brings name up to date

ALVECHURCH Grammar School Trust is changing its name in the hope more people will understand what it does.

The trust, which makes financial grants to the young people of the former Alvechurch and Barnt Green Parish is to become known as Alvechurch Educational Trust.

The funds come from an endowment created when Alvechurch Grammar School closed in 1892. The grants are for educational purposes for those under the age of 25.

Serving up aces for Dementia

VILLAGE tennis players answered a plea to fire down as many aces as possible to raise awareness and funds for families facing dementia, *writes Fraser Sutherland*.

The Barnt Green Tennis Club members took part in a country-wide "Tennis-a-thon" organised by Dementia UK. They were led by Faye Edwards, who organised the event at Barnt Green Sports Club.

More than 40 members played throughout the day in 29C heat, with every serve smashed and set won supporting vital research into dementia.

Faye also acquired sporting equipment donated by Yonex which was used as prizes for winning games and arranged the £100 raffle that further helped to raise money for the charity.

She was keen to support Dementia UK because she had a personal connection to the cause after recently losing a family member to dementia. Faye also found that the importance of the cause resonated with many members of the club.

Games were played continuously throughout the day with the perfect weather conditions only further inspiring the participants.

As the Tennis-a-thon drew to a close, the event had raised £1,050 – more than £200 higher than Faye's initial goal of £800.

Donations to support the appeal can still be made through a Justgiving page at www.justgiving.com/team/Teambg

Top: Faye Edwards (far left) with Barnt Green's Tennis-a-thon team. **Above:** Serving through the heat.

Special guest: Liz Nuttall (above, centre) with the Barnt Green Chuggers.

Golden tips for runners

VILLAGE running club Barnt Green Chuggers welcomed former middle and long-distance athlete Liz Nuttall (formerly Liz McColgan) to run with the group.

Liz, who won Commonwealth gold medals for Scotland, and Olympic silver and World Championship gold for GB, attended the regular Monday evening Chuggers running meet.

Runners of all abilities were able to get advice on technique and nutrition, as Liz shared her wealth of knowledge.

Liz was staying in the area while her daughter, Eilish McColgan, took part in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. She witnessed Eilish taking Gold in the 10,000m, with a Commonwealth Games record time of 30:48:60, and Silver in the 5000m event.

■ **More details for anyone interested in joining the Chuggers and Chaingang (the sister, social cycling club), can be found at www.barntgreenchuggers.co.uk**

Sam's iron resolve

VILLAGE triathlete Sam Boswell returned to full distance racing at the Ironman UK after a two-year battle with long covid.

After the 3.8km swim and 180km bike, Sam was sitting in second position overall and first in her category with a 40-minute lead. But being unable to run consistently until this spring caused her to drop to second in her category during the run, finishing 10th woman overall.

"The course was the toughest I have ever done and I honestly didn't think I would race again so I am really pleased to be back to full Ironman," said Sam. "There is no way I could have reached this stage without the help of my sponsor Elliott Nash and, of course, my family".

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King's on shortlist for five top awards

The King's Worcester Foundation has announced that all three of its schools have been shortlisted for a total of five awards in this year's Independent School of the Year (ISOTY) Awards.

This is the highest number of award nominations in the schools' history.

King's Worcester Senior School is on the shortlist in a number of categories, including Co-Educational School of the Year as well as Sporting Achievement and Rising Star of the Year categories.

As well as King's Worcester being recognised, the Prep Schools, King's St Alban's and King's Hawford, have also both been shortlisted for Prep School of the Year.

The Independent School of the Year awards are designed to showcase independent school success stories and celebrate the extraordinary student experience provided during the 2021 and 2022 academic years.

This year there are 22 award categories, which received more than 1,000 entries from UK Independent Schools.

The shortlist news is another achievement for King's, alongside their recent recognition in *The Sunday Times* Top 10 West Midlands Independent Secondary School league and also the recent Top 20 UK Nursery Group Award received by the King's nurseries for the second year running.

Gareth Doodes, Headmaster at King's Worcester and CEO of the Foundation, said: "We are delighted to have been shortlisted in so many categories this year. It is a great acknowledgement that our schools, staff and pupils have been recognised for our co-educational provision, sporting achievement and our talented young pupils."

Finalists will be announced during September, with the awards ceremony taking place later in the year.

King's Hawford (above) and King's St Alban's (below) have been shortlisted in the Prep School of the Year category.

MEDIEVAL MERRIE

A splendid summer's day greeted villagers to the first Blackwell Festival since lockdown. The theme was "Medieval" with many dressing up accordingly. Guests included archers, armourers, morris dancers and tanners.

There was also a very special weapon from the period, a Trebuchet, hand-built especially for the event (pictured below).

Hundreds of years ago, this ingenious catapult used weights to project missiles at castle walls. In Blackwell it allowed children to compete to see how far their small bags would fly.

And despite the heat of the day, villagers enjoyed the now-traditional tug of war. *Pictures*/Keith Woolford

MENT

They're off!

The Lickey Hills Bilberry Wake, which commemorates a time when real horses were raced for competition, returned this summer. Children fashioned hobby horses by filling socks with hay, adding eyes and fitting to a stick. These were then raced around a short obstacle course.

Ranger Dave Beardsmore (below, testing a jump) made sure that fair play was observed, with different aged entrants in separate categories. Even the mums and dads had a go. The event was organised jointly by members of The Lickey Hills Society and the Lickey Hills rangers. *Pictures*/Keith Woolford

Flower club faces final arrangement

A VILLAGE INSTITUTION of more than 40 years is at risk of being lost as it struggles to recruit new members in the wake of Covid-19 lockdowns.

Rowney Green Flower Club was established after a chance conversation while walking home from church one Sunday in the 1980s, and has since been a popular and thriving club for flower enthusiasts and those who enjoy a beautiful bloom.

The Flower Club meetings include demonstrations from talented floral experts. Originally the club benefitted from free demonstrations from members of the Rosehill Flower Club which has since closed. Since the club's most recent annual general meeting,

A selection of floral arrangements at Rowney Green Flower Club.

members were informed that due to dwindling numbers, there is a high possibility that Rowney Green will lose this longstanding club unless more join.

The Rowney Green Horticultural Society holds a show once a year (the first Saturday in September) where members have the opportunity to show off their creative talents. New members don't need to have any experience, but just enjoy watching a professional making amazing arrangements, and maybe gather a few tips on the way.

The next meeting of the Flower Club is on Thursday 22 September at 7.30pm. At this meeting guests will be given free entry to try the group. Normal entry is £5 per person which includes tea, coffee and biscuits.

The demonstrator will be Tina Miles, from Oasis Flowers & Balloons, Barnt Green – and there will be a raffle to take home the arrangement she creates.

For more information contact Felicity on 07812 336263.

The anonymous birder

How to enjoy village birdlife

"What's that on the apple tree?" "An apple?" came the reply." "No, the bird, it's like a robin that got dressed in a hurry this morning . . . but it's definitely not a robin."

A scan through the kitchen binoculars and birdguide (I'm assuming it's totally normal to have these items on hand) reveal our mystery visitor to be a female redstart. An absolute Premier League bird for a local league birder.

So what was this bird doing in a suburban garden in the English midlands in September? Migrating is what. Every year in spring, millions of birds, comprising approximately 50 species, fly to the UK in order to take advantage of the long summer days and minimal travel restrictions to feed and rear their young.

When their domestic chores are over they will set off back to their holiday homes, mainly in Europe and Africa in late summer and autumn, only to do it all again next year.

The redstart was using our garden as the bird equivalent of a motorway service station, but with cheaper food and no toilet inspection charts. Just as well, with a journey ahead of be-

Premier League sighting: A female common redstart.

tween 1,000 to 3,500 miles. Discovering something new or rare is a joy but if you want migratory birds that are easier to spot then those that nest in close proximity to us, in buildings, are a good place to start.

The sickle-winged screaming parties of swifts seen over suburban gardens have already gone by mid August, but swallows and, less often now, house martins can still be seen gathering on roofs and overhead wires or quartering on open fields, usually mopping up insects around indifferent livestock.

If they've got a white patch on their lower back and make farty noises, then well done: you've got house martins. Tail streamers with twittering and buzzing, it's swallows. Neither of which are the long-departed swifts, so that's those three sorted.

If you are a bit more adventurous then the key is noticing or hearing something different and doing a bit of detective work.

If I could "flex" for a moment (young speak for boasting), some other notable autumn returners on my list are a spotted flycatcher pinging out and back on invisible elastic from next door's pear tree for a couple of hours. Also, pied flycatchers doing much the same on a local golf course.

If you get your ears attuned, the "hueet hueet" contact call of willow warblers – "some nice berries over here mate" – or the "chiff chaff" call of, believe it or not, chiff chaffs, are not too tricky to latch on to.

Good luck, keep 'em peeled as Shaw Taylor once said, and if you don't see a golden eagle soaring over the Lickeys, there's plenty of winter visitors coming to a garden near you soon.

JL

20 From TheVillage archive Years Ago

THE COVER of our September 2012 issue showed the view of Upper Bittel Reservoir from Groveley Farm. In this issue Richard Peach visited the farm to find out more about the local milk production, and how villagers could order fresh milk delivered to their doorstep.

IN THE NEWS:
Alvechurch Parish Council were handed the keys to their new office in the centre of the village, 108 years after it was formed. Derek Walters, council leader at the time is pictured with then-Clerk Gill Lungley (right) and assistant clerk Wendy Carney (left).

A NEW BENCH created by artist blacksmith Chris Yeomans (below, left) with help from Ben Cowles, was commissioned. It featured images of village life designed by Alvechurch Middle School pupils welded into the metal. The bench now lives on the village green on Bear Hill.

THE BLACKWELL WHEELERS (right) undertook a cycle ride from London to Blackwell, which expected to raise around £6,500 for the Edwards Trust, Sargent Cancer Care for Children and the County Air Ambulance.

10 From TheVillage archive Years Ago

THE COVER of our September 2002 issue featured a vibrant pink and green late lupin, photographed by Dennis Brown of Hopwood.

IN THE NEWS:
Alvechurch Parish Council, after years of searching and lots of requests, found a site to create up to 40 'mini-plots' for allotments on land bordering Old Rectory Lane. As the magazine went to press work had begun at the site to start developing it for the allotments, with an aim for 30 ready for use by autumn and an additional 10 possible in the future.

BEAR HILL PRESCHOOL celebrated the end of term with a series of events including an Olympic torch paragde, sports day and leavers' party. Myfanwy Griffiths, Chairman of the Pre-school committee at the time noted that children returning in September would have a "new look" pre-school to look forward to.

APPLETREE GARAGE owner Dave Hodgins – along with Jack the dog – opened their own business in Alvechurch. The garage, originally located by the canal is still thriving and can now be found on Cooper's Hill.

The bus wasn't wanted

Dear Editor – I write in response to articles in *The Village* concerning a community bus service for Alvechurch, operated by Shencare.

Yet again we have a white elephant proposal dreamt up by people who never consult with the community. Clearly those who came up with this idea have never used our local buses, or don't live in the area, or both.

The claim in one of the articles was that the parish council and district councillors received many representations for the service.

I would encourage those promoting this "community bus" service to abandon it now and stop wasting our money.

Howard Allen, Alvechurch

(A frequent bus user, but more so in other areas of the country where services are so much better.)

Roundel wrong

Dear Editor – I must agree with the comment of Mike Betts (Misplaced roundels) last issue. This car (pictured, above) is parked over the 20 mph

road marking on Bear Hill, perfectly legally. Common sense should have prevailed and the road marking should have been put in front of the drive a bit further up which is in constant use.

Michael Lewis
Alvechurch

Have your say . . . about anything!

email: editor@villageonline.co.uk
or write to: Letters, The Village, The Limes, Swan Street, Alvechurch B48 7RR

Please include your name and address – even if you request them to be withheld from publication. We reserve the right to edit submissions for reasons of space or legality.
The deadline for the next issue is September 19th 2022.

WHERE'S VINNY?

OUR VINNY WINNERS picture is slightly different this month. Elsa Kenkre, aged 11 who will be starting at RGS Worcester in September, and her eight year old brother Tom who attends RGS The Grange, are normally found in Barnt Green but were on holiday in Portugal as we went to press and will be collecting their new Mini Vinny on their return.

If you want to win one for yourself, you'll need to try to find the little hedgehog hiding somewhere in this magazine (the one shown above is just a guide!)

Tell us where he's hiding via phone, email or post – see details on bottom of the page opposite – and please include your contact details, especially if leaving a voicemail message, and we'll draw a winner at random.

The closing date is midnight on September 12. We'll let you know if you've won and you can collect your Mini Vinny from our office – and pose for a photo with your prize!

A caring lunch

Dear Editor – Alvechurch Baptist Church will be hosting a lunch for carers and for those for whom they care on October 12 at 12.00. It is hoped that this will be a time not only for enjoying food but making friends, learning of opportunities and listening to concerns.

A representative from Worcestershire Carers will be present to help with any questions. This is the first such lunch but if as a carer or cared for you find it useful we hope to provide a lunch every three months.

If you would like to come on the 12th please ring either 07917 108934 or 0121 447 7369 where a message can be left or e-mail dlshoesmith@yahoo.co.uk if you would like to book a place.

Dave Shoesmith
Alvechurch Baptist Church

The Village *View*...

We've worried many times in this column about "Birmingham" spilling over the top of Hopwood Hill and around the sides of the Lickeys into our green, village fields and valleys.

It is powerful imagery when you're trying to express the way the metropolis, in quick succession, gobbled up previously rural communities such as North Field and Long Bridge.

But this summer we've been looking back the other way and marvelling at the "Brum Ting", an expression that sounded strange at first, but over the course of a few sunny weeks opened into a wonderful parasol term for what's been happening in the city over the past half a century.

An alien, or even just someone from London, would have been scratching their heads while watching the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, even with the admirable efforts of the BBC commentators trying to bring sense to what we were watching.

It was, of course, a celebration of the glorious past of the region as the crucible of the Industrial Revolution – but much more than that, of Birmingham's reinvention as the most colourful city in the nation, at least for the two weeks of the games.

We know many people from this area were thrilled by the opportunity to hop over the county line to take part, whether as volunteers or spectators, and in doing so came home with memories of a Birmingham so different to the one many of us witnessed during the latter years of the 20th century.

It was a privilege to see Birmingham overflowing with happy people, with the city centre's architecture, old and new, on show in its best light. It really did feel like there was a renewed confidence and that Birmingham's renaissance might this time be for real after its many false starts. From here, we can almost see the glow of pride shining over the horizon from the north.

But, as we said at the top of this column, there are many who would like to make easy money building on our green fields rather than take on the more expensive task of regenerating the many brown-field sites of the city.

They want us to believe that Birmingham and the Black Country are bursting at the seams and we should allow "garden villages" to be built to accommodate the overflow of citizens.

Birmingham has shown how wonderful it can be: but this doesn't mean we want it to swallow us up.

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Village Nature

Looking and learning

Mary Green looks back over the spring and summer activities of Alvechurch Biodiversity Group.

ALVECHURCH Biodiversity Group is an open group of people, originally drawn from the Alvechurch Walking Buddies and Cleaner Greener Alvechurch.

We meet to walk through our countryside and village looking at how biodiverse the habitat is, how to help it stay that way where it is, and what we can do to help where it isn't.

In spring we looked at roadside verges and hedges on the edge of Alvechurch. We found some fine flowering hedgerows which will by now be bearing fruits to feed birds later, and some flailed hedges which are of little use for other species or themselves.

Most verges were then in good flower, including old woodland species like bluebells and wild garlic, and we even found two quite uncommon species, goldilocks buttercup and few-flowered garlic. There was good birdsong along the flowering hedges. We noticed along Birmingham Road how some residents have improved the green verges opposite their houses, encouraging and planting wild flowers. Most verges in the village were unfortunately mowed between one walk and the next, so some flowers and their insects were lost.

At the same time, we were active trying to preserve the biodiversity of a field we had visited and recorded last year.

The farmer had been carrying out what looked like unsuitable changes there and we worked with Natural England to have the field listed as of ecological and historical significance, and make sure the landowner knew the law as applied to ancient pastures like this.

In summer we looked at good local Alvechurch hay meadows and old flower-rich grassland, with all the butterflies and moths they feed. We could see the different balance of species in a field which would soon be cut for hay, and one which would soon be grazed by cattle but not mown.

We've been keeping our eyes on public places in the village like The Meadows, where there is some good wildlife-friendly management and some not quite so appropriate, and St Laurence Churchyard, where an unmown patch left this year has allowed old churchyard flowers to bloom.

Later this year there will be other walks, notified via the Alvechurch Walking Buddies and other local social media pages.

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Parish news

Lighting up the Parish

We're pleased to announce that our pathway lighting upgrade project has almost been completed.

Many residents have welcomed and favourably commented on the upgrade. All concrete columns have been replaced with new steel ones and some 90 new LED lanterns will have replaced antiquated ones which relied on 'SOX' (sodium vapour) lamps which are now very hard to source due to their manufacture being phased out.

Other improvements have also been made as part of the upgrade. Some columns have been relocated to facilitate entry to private drives. Church Walk and St. Laurence's churchyard are to benefit from a heritage style LED lantern more appropriate for their location.

In addition, every lighting column we own will have a new identification label applied to it. It will stipulate it is owned and is the responsibility of APC and provide an email address to report any failures. This will help to speedily resolve any problems that fall on us to deal with as there are many lights that belong to and are the responsibility of the County Council, not APC.

We have set out specific requirements regarding the operation of the new lanterns. This mainly included the need for the new lanterns to automatically dim during certain periods of the night.

/continued overleaf

Lighting up the Parish

continued from previous page

This results in a reduction of light pollution in our Parish, is less intrusive for residents living close to the lights and reduces our electric consumption which will be reflected in the Council's expenditure.

There are some 20 lights still to be upgraded. Unfortunately, many of these require a 'Traffic Management Permit' to be granted by WCC. Many have been refused by County but should be approved by the end of August or beginning of September. Currently, our lighting upgrade project will be delivered and completed within budget.

Christmas cheer

In preparation for the Christmas festive season, we are having all of our Christmas external display lights refurbished, which will make them brighter and more colourful than those seen in past years. In addition, with the help and a financial contribution from the owners of the Precinct in Alvechurch and additional funds from APC, the two trees in the Precinct will, for the first time, be suitably illuminated adding to the Seasonal Festive cheer in December.

This year, the village lights will be switched on during our event on Saturday 3 December. And don't forget we'll be running our usual Parish Christmas light competition. It's never to early to start planning your display!

Meet the Councillors

We're pleased to introduce three new Councillors who joined APC in July.

Paul Edwards
Hopwood

I have recently retired from the NHS after over 44 years, within which I held several senior executive roles including, when I retired, as the Director of Commissioning and Primary Care for Herefordshire NHS. I have also undertaken several operational roles, including the Director of Operations for the Birmingham Children's Hospital. I am Gold Command trained for public emergencies, since I was designated as the senior health executive for the health community for NHS Gloucestershire and participated in the on call rota for the county.

I am married to Clare, a nurse by profession and secretary to the Hopwood Village Hall Committee. As a family we are also fully involved in public service; my two sons working in the police, and as a civil servant, plus my two daughters are a specialist dental nurse and an assistant editor for the BBC.

Our next **Meet the Councillor** event will take place towards the end of September. Call us on **0121 447 8016** for dates and times, or follow us on Facebook.

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Neil Ravenhall
Alvechurch

I'm married to Julie with two grown up children, Adam and Lucy. Julie works for Birmingham Community Health Care NHS Trust in Birmingham as a registered nurse. Both Julie and I now have more time as a result of Julie working part-time and I run my own business.

I have lived in Tanyard Lane in Alvechurch since 2004 and both my children attended the local village schools. My wife Julie sat on the PTA at both Crown Meadow and Alvechurch Middle School and I help support many of the organised school fund raising events. I was also the football manager U12 Alvechurch Lions 2008/09 season.

I have over 30 years' operational experience in aerospace, rail and automotive industries, holding senior management positions in quality, manufacturing, operations management and continuous improvement, both in the UK and at a global level. This knowledge I believe could be exploited in supporting the Council to develop and deliver its obligations to the local communities it serves. My current employment status puts me in a position where I can afford time and commit to the wider community.

Keith Wiseman
Alvechurch

I moved onto Blythesway in the village with my partner in 1986 where we remain now. My two daughters have grown up in the village and both attended the First and Middle Schools. They also attended many of the clubs in the village, both paid and voluntary, which have always been such an important outlet for our children and need to remain so now.

I was a Parent Governor at the Middle School at the time of the transition from the old site to its current location and in total spent 11 years as Governor there taking a variety of different roles. More recently I became a co-opted Governor at Crown Meadow First School where I have been Chair for the past three years and am also safeguarding governor.

I retired three years ago after working for Birmingham Local Authority for 41 years. I worked in education which culminated in me being Deputy Head at City of Birmingham School, which is one of the largest pupil referral units in the country, having 460 pupils aged 4-16. While there I was also a member of a number of cross-city, multi-agency, strategic groups including 'Knife Crime Action Group', 'Birmingham Gang Strategy Group' and the 'Birmingham Police and Schools Panels'. These groups were responsible for developing Local Authority/Council policies and for disseminating and implementing them across the City in a variety of settings including schools, youth groups and third sector organisations.

Following my initial retirement I was contacted, almost immediately, by Birmingham LA to be part of a three-person 'Leadership Recovery Team' at a local BESD special school that had failed both its CQC and Ofsted inspections where the pupils were deemed at great risk. I took on the role as 'safeguarding lead' and we managed to transfer all pupils to more appropriate settings over a 12 month period before the school was closed permanently.

Wildlife spotting at the Wiggin

A new sign encouraging residents to spot wildlife at the Wiggin will be installed this autumn.

Our thanks go to Mrs Mary Green, who has helped us develop the area, and who has supplied photographs and content for the sign.

At least 12 different types of butterflies can be seen in the meadow, as well as damselflies, dragonflies and bees, all feeding on the vast variety of plants. Keep an eye out for the sign and see how many can you spot?

Community bus

After much campaigning by APC, and with the support of our County Councillor Aled Luckman, a limited bus service was introduced to serve residents linking Alvechurch to Longbridge, Redditch and Bromsgrove. Unfortunately, the service has had little patronage and is likely to be withdrawn. As a result, it is unlikely that such a service will be reinstated in the foreseeable future.

Have your say

Do you have questions for the Parish Council? Or would you like to comment on anything written in this latest newsletter? Email our Clerk on the address opposite, or join in the conversation on our Facebook page. We look forward to hearing from you!

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Goodbye to summer

Amateur astronomer **Brian Watkiss** peers into the *Village* night sky.

Ah September, back to school, it starts to get chillier and the nights begin to draw in. It's not all doom and gloom though, with the Autumnal Equinox occurring around September 23rd this year (at 0203 to be precise) the rate of change of the time of sunset is at its greatest.

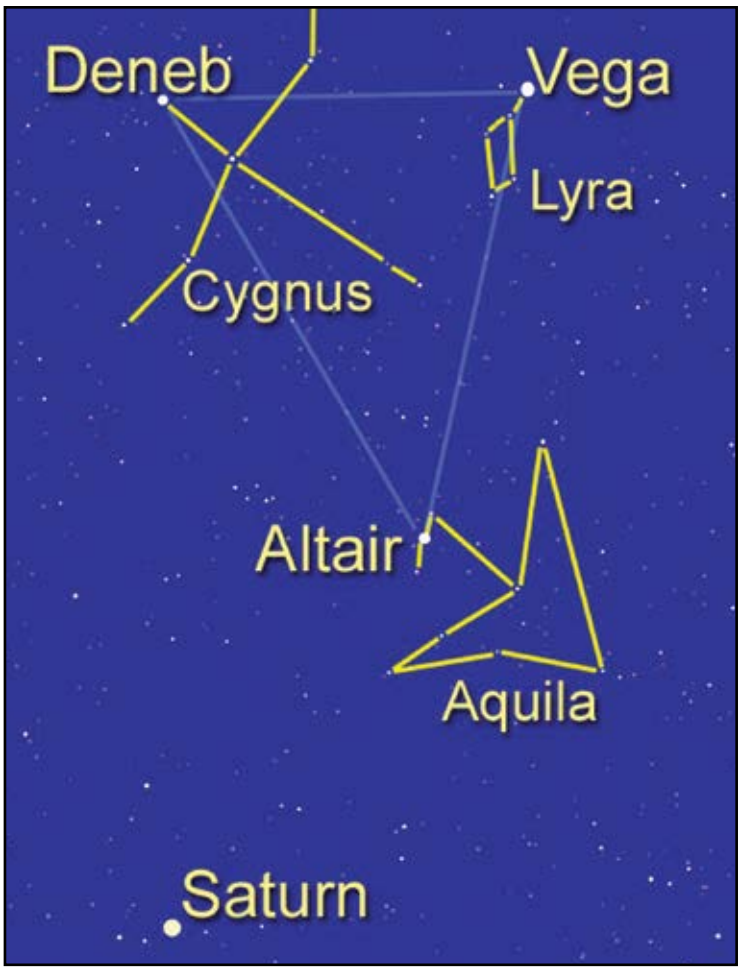
This leads to the time the Sun disappears over the horizon changing from about eight o'clock at the beginning of the month to roughly one hour sooner by the end of the month and, of course, the equinox is the only time it sets exactly in the west.

This is the time to start looking out for satellites and especially the most spectacular of all, the International Space Station. This is a must-see for everyone and its days are numbered as NASA has stated their intention to support it only up to 2030 and Russia threatening to withdraw even sooner.

Its orbit varies a lot as it gets boosted on a regular basis to overcome the effect of the drag of the tiny bit of atmosphere it encounters, so the only way to know when it is visible is to look at www.heavens-above.com and make Alvechurch your location. More astronauts are due to be launched by SpaceX to the ISS near the end of the month so look out for that too.

As soon as the sky starts to really darken, very high in the south, in fact almost overhead, is the star Vega. This is the very bright, bluish head of the constellation of Lyra and forms one corner of the triangle of stars that make up the "Summer Triangle". To the left, at the head of the cross of stars that is Cygnus, is Deneb, the tail of the swan and the second corner of our triangle.

Below them, halfway to the horizon is the third corner, marked by Altair in the constellation of Aquila, the Eagle. Two elegant birds and an ancient musical instrument in our skies. The bright star over in the west is one of my favourite stars, Arcturus in the constellation of Bootes and he's a farmer of some sort.



Dark skies make for bright stars: Find Vega in the dark and catch a glimpse of the 'Summer triangle'.

Back to our triangle which is actually pointing to Pluto at the moment. Of course, this can't be seen without a very large telescope but another planet is starting to hove into view. This is Saturn but it's not very high in the sky at the moment. To find it, imagine a line from Vega down to Altair and continue it further down, halfway to the horizon. Just a little to the left of this point you should find the ringed planet, very near at its brightest as it is almost exactly opposite the Sun.

The full Moon on the 10th will spoil things a little, but otherwise it should be possible to find Saturn especially at New Moon on the 25th.

Jupiter will start appearing a little later, further to the left. So happy satellite and planet spotting. Told you it wasn't all doom and gloom!

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Open Bite:

Open bite can cause poor or painful chewing and even speech impairment. It can also lead to greater issues like TMJD.

Underbite:
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Invisalign Before and After Case Studies

Case Study 1 - Crowded Teeth

Case Study 2 - Gappy Teeth

Case Study 3 - Crossbite

Case Study 4 - Deep Bite

Case Study 5 - Open Bite

Case Study 6 - Underbite

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Pictures & Words by **KEITH WOOLFORD**

GLASTONBEOLEY BACK WITH A BEAT

This summer, Glastonbeoley returned for its biggest event yet; a weekend of fun, food and live music. The home-grown music festival was established in 2018 following a special back garden birthday celebration that took on a life of its own.

It was the brain-child of Debbie Joyner, a local singer-songwriter, who was able to quickly recruit family and friends to establish a close-knit group of enthusiastic volunteers to support her. Since its inauguration, more than £40,000 has been raised for charities, not including the total raised from this year's event.

The bands and artists donate their time to perform for crowds of visitors. This year, Birmingham and Solihull RFC, the Bees, played host to two large adjoined stages. Two further covered areas also housed the smaller groups and solo artists, one in the club house and another in the beer tent, which provided a more intimate setting to enjoy the music.

The first day on Saturday ultimately ended up being very wet due to rainstorms and despite great bands and a spectacular rainbow and sunset, the visitor number dipped. However the organisers were happy to honour any outstanding tickets and carried them forward to the following day for people to enjoy Glastonbeoley in better weather which drew in a much larger crowd.

Plenty of side stands, food stalls and childrens entertainment were enjoyed, adding to the festival atmosphere and family fun at this year's Glastonbeoley.

Above: Oya Batucada Samba band hold their sticks up, ready to make some noise.
Left: Festival fashion out in force, the rain clearly didn't dampen any spirits.
Below: The Glastonbeoley team in front of the stage with 'Not so Merry'.

Above: Glastonbeoley volunteers pass round a bucket.
Below: Festival-goers dancing and relaxing, while watching the performers on stage.

Above: 'Burn' take the stage.
Below: 'Hatstand' performing.

Above Right: Visitors enjoy a drink under the cover from the slightly damp weather.

Left: 'Forro Tempo' happy to be on stage with their instruments.

Right: Members of Oya Batucada enjoying a dance to live music.

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Meet the team

Martin Pryor
Financial Planner & Adviser

Business & Finance degree to Graduate training course at Prudential, leading to becoming a qualified independent financial adviser and setting up PPM Financial Planning in 2006.

Laura Daniels
Mortgage Adviser

Laura joined in 2016, providing admin support whilst completing training to become our qualified mortgage broker.

Nicky Lowndes
General Manager

Nicky Joined PPM Financial Planning at the very beginning in 2006 bringing with her 19 years of banking experience with HSBC.

Laura Siddall
Financial Adviser

Laura has 19 years of industry experience. Laura's role is to construct financial plans for clients using our cash flow modelling software, helping deliver true financial planning.

Louise Wheeler
Paraplanner

Louise Joined PPM in September 2021, bringing with her 8 years of paraplanning experience and 13 years working within financial services.

How to tackle the biggest threat to wealth: inflation

I have seen many investors with a portfolio that has no real relevance to their lifestyle and ambitions.

Often they have some lower risk investments in deposit accounts and then longer-term investments to help provide the best returns they can get, or an income to supplement their pension.

But far more can be done to make your money support your lifestyle.

In a previous article I discussed having an emergency fund and then investing money in lower risk deposit accounts to fund expenditure more than income within the short to medium term (up to five years).

Longer term, inflation is probably the biggest threat to your wealth.

I have said that I see an awful lot of people taking more risk than they need to take with their investments, but almost as common as taking too much risk is taking too little risk.

People fear investing money in the stock market so they keep all their hard-earned wealth in deposit accounts, safe in the knowledge that this time next year they will have the same amount plus interest. Unfortunately, they forget about inflation.

If you have £1,000 in the bank this year and earn 1% interest, next year you will have £1,010. Unfortunately, if inflation is 3%, the buying power of that £1,010 is only £979.

Their money is actually decreasing in value but the investor does not see that; however they do see the cost of living increasing.

To counter inflation risk, over the longer term you may need to take a little more market risk, but

Opting for too much safety can erode your spending power, writes Martin Pryor.

over the longer term history shows you will maintain the real value of your money, although this is not guaranteed.

If you are never going to run out of money, don't take unnecessary risks to get more money than you need; it may go the other way. Instead, reduce your level of risk to just enough to match – or slightly beat – inflation.

Another consideration when structuring your wealth should be asset allocation and cost.

This often has the benefit of enabling you to ignore the financial industry's hype. It is an industry full of people making promises they can't keep, promises about "beating the markets", picking the best stocks and promises of high returns. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Thorough research shows that asset allocation and low charges have much more influence on returns than a fund manager's skill (which can add more risk), market timing and all the other things the "industry" claims it is good at.

If you would like to know more about evidence-based investing, we have an interesting booklet that we would be happy to email, free of charge. Please email me to request a copy.

It is also important to consider how your income requirements change throughout your life.

For example, in retirement you will probably want to spend more in the earlier stages ("active" retirement) than the later stages ("traditional" retirement) but many people are advised to take a level income throughout retirement. This often means they don't have enough money when they want to spend it and too much money when they can't spend it!

Again, cash-flow modelling can help with this.

The main purpose of wealth is to support our lifestyles. As our lifestyle changes, our wealth needs to be able to adapt to those changes. Remember, If you do not know how much is enough, you do not have a financial plan.

Please email me for a free copy of the book **Enough, How much money do you need for the rest of your life?**

This book explains our process and how we approach financial planning. Hopefully after reading the book you will want to know more. If you do then I would be more than happy to have an initial meeting which is without cost or obligation.

Martin Pryor
Lifestyle Financial Planner
For more information, please contact us
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www.ppmfinancialplanning.com

The Value of your investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. You should seek independent financial advice if you are unsure of the right decision for your circumstances.

Working with mortgage and home-sale experts

Village Financial Solutions joins forces with Michelle & Co Sales & Lettings.

Village Financial continues to work in partnership with Michelle & Co helping home movers from their Barnt Green office.

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Please call Michelle and Co on 0121 274 0568 and take advantage of their years of experience to appraise your property and discuss how they can maximise your chances of selling your home in a timely and efficient manner.

Mark and the team at Village Financial will continue to offer support for all your mortgage and protection needs, whether that be for first-time buyers, home movers or just looking for a new mortgage deal. They will also continue to offer advice for equity release and buy to let mortgage needs.

If you are concerned about interest rates and are looking to re-finance, they are now able to reserve a rate up to six months in advance of your current mortgage rate expiring. In the current climate where we are seeing interest rates rise, it is important to act early.

Please feel free to make an appointment by calling 0121 445 1227 or by emailing: info@villagefinancial.co.uk

Mark Meads (above) with the Michelle & Co team and (right) ready to provide expert advice.

This firm usually charges a fee for mortgage advice. The amount of the fee will depend upon your needs and circumstances. This will be discussed and agreed with you at the earliest opportunity. Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up payments on your mortgage. An Equity Release product will reduce the value of your estate, will not be suitable for everyone and may affect your entitlement to state benefits. To understand the features and risks please ask for a personalised illustration. Village Financial Solutions Ltd is an appointed representative of PRIMIS Mortgage Network. PRIMIS Mortgage Network is a trading style of Personal Touch Financial Services Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Pictured: Foxgloves on Foxhills, Alvechurch . . . why there are so many in flower this year is still a bit of a mystery.

THE FOXGLOVES ARE OFF!

Mary Green discusses Pignuts and Dead Nettles and why we shouldn't forget their ancient names.

As I write this we have just come out of a short period of extreme heat and a long period of relative dryness. You can see the effects in the desert-like conditions of mown grass, and the relative lushness of flowers by the canal where it is moist. On the whole, perennial wild plants have been fine if growing naturally, though they have raced into flower and seed rather quickly. Something seems to have had a devastating effect on insects though, unless they are late and will suddenly

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come back through August. There are fewer butterflies, moths and dragonflies than last year. I sat out for a picnic on a hot, still evening in July – and was not bothered by midges!

I have been trying to find out why there were so many Foxgloves everywhere this year. Foxgloves are biennial – in other words they grow for a whole year before flowering in the second year. Then they can live a few years. This means any new flowers this year came from two years ago – 2020 – as well as flowers on some older plants.

Obviously, plants only seed when allowed to grow fully without being cut down. So, the fact that less vegetation cutting was done in 2020 during lockdowns might help. Last year there was less cutting of verges later in the summer too, so the existing ones will have survived well.

Foxgloves grow on woodland edges, field and road verges and like to be well drained but not dry out. They may not like this dry year so much.

Thinking of Foxgloves reminds me of how interesting our names for flowers and plants are. The "gloves" part is understandable as it's so tempting to put your fingers in. Some people say that they were originally "little folks' gloves" i.e. fairies' gloves. Others say they tend to grow near foxes' earths, which they do especially on field edges.

I like the fact that they are so common here on Foxhill Lane. Their Latin name is *digitalis* which relates to fingers too. Digitalis, originally extracted from Foxgloves, is a powerful drug used to treat heart complaints.

Our common English names for plants are very old and not fixed – plants often have different names in different regions. Latin names on the other hand are standard and date back a few centuries to when plants were classified into families. Both are useful. People who come on my biodiversity walks always want to know the names of plants. In a way they don't matter – what's important is how all the plants grow together. In another way they matter a lot. These words are disappearing from the vocabulary of young people and might die out, taking all the knowledge inside them with them. There has been a project called "The lost words" working with children to recapture these old names. I think curiosity about names helps curiosity about the plants, so people will be interested in them and not let them be destroyed.

So many of our English plant names teach us about how plants were used in past times. One of the plants I wrote about last time, Pignut, has a swollen root or "nut" underground which pigs

Ancient plants (clockwise, from above): Marsh Woundwort along the canal, Betony, Self Heal in meadows and Feverfew.

(and other animals) would happily root up and eat. Similarly, Goosegrass and Chickweed remind us of how we used to expect domestic fowl to eat green plants rather than just cereals.

Many names come from old herbal uses. I am currently admiring a fine display of Marsh Woundwort along the canal – a more showy version of the common Hedge Woundwort. Both have a chemical that acts to stop wounds bleeding and were used in dressings. They smell rather like disinfectant.

A similar name is Self-heal, common in meadows, pastures and even lawns. This was used for cuts and bruises. Feverfew and Sneezewort, both growing locally, one common and one rarer, are self-explanatory.

Latin names are useful here too. Betony, a rarer plant now of meadows and pastures, is *Betonica officianalis*. Anything called "officianalis" was a recognised herb, important enough to be in the list of known herbs.

Betony was an important medicinal herb but it's hard to find out exactly what it cured. Since it seems to have been used with other plants, it's likely it was a kind of catalyst releasing the powers of the other herbs.

Some names show us how people once lived. One of the prettiest meadow and pasture flowers is Ladies' Bedstraw. This yellow cloud of fluffy little flowers has a lovely scent, especially when dried. It was used in bedding. Mattresses at one time were big calico bags stuffed with hay or straw. The addition of sweet-smelling flowers was a bonus, especially for ladies!

Sometimes "Lady" plants are named for Our Lady, the Virgin Mary. This is true of the Lady's Mantle, a relatively rare flower in the wild which grows in one old pasture locally. It's common in gardens in a slightly larger form known as Our Lady's Mantle and is known for its purity. This is connected to its Latin name. It's called *Alchemilla mollis*. The first word means "the little Alchemist" and the second means "soft".

The soft leaves of the plant collect the dew and are usually spangled with water in the early mornings. This was thought to be extra-pure water, which could be used for Alchemy – the mystical science of the Middle-ages. You will be beautiful if you wash your face in this dew on the first day of May! This purity became linked to Mary. This plant shows how varied the folklore of plants is and how the names hold old meanings.

English names don't relate to families like the Latin ones. They are more linked to how the plant looks. We all know the Nettle. Its name is an Old English one and has stayed the same ever since, with very few other local names except perhaps Stingers. There are other flowers called White Dead Nettle and Red Dead Nettle, not to mention Hemp Nettle, which are not related to it at all. However, their leaves look a bit like nettle, so they were named after it.

The Dead Nettles are very live flowers and were presumably called dead because they don't sting. Red Dead Nettle is actually pink, like a lot of flowers called red (Red Campion for example). "Pink" is a relatively modern word and "red" used to cover both colours.

In September you will see the last flowers fading, but may see Michaelmas Daisies, not native but naturalised, and named after 29 September, Michaelmas day.

In May of course we had Mayflowers, in June we had St John's wort,

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Plants with human names: (above) A bright yellow Johnny-go-to-bed-at-noon and (below) easy to spot Ragged Robin.

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named for St John's day or old mid-summer on 24 June. Now along the canal is Autumn Hawkbit, a tall yellow flower. In January you may find Winter Heliotrope. Seasons and Saints' days also live on in our plants.

Some names are very descriptive. One I like is Johnny-go-to-bed-at-noon. This is a big plant related to the dandelion and has those huge "clocks" of seeds you see in hay meadows. It has pointed flower buds which open in the morning sun and – yes – close up at midday.

This Johnny isn't the only plant with a person's name. The most usual ones are Jack/John and Robert/Robin. Both of these are also old names given to the spirit of nature in various forms – Jack in the Green or the Green Man, Robin Goodfellow or Puck. So, we have Jack-by-the-hedge, another name for Garlic-mustard, Herb Robert and Ragged Robin.

Plants were always seen as carrying the spirit of nature, which is interesting because now we know they are at the heart of our biodiversity, providing habitat for everything else.

Which takes us back to our insects. They have fewer common English names. There are dozens of species of bees, wasps and flies, but we don't use their names much. The exception is butterflies, and some moths, which have well known English names.

The name Butterfly comes probably from the yellow of the Brimstone, one of our earliest appearing ones in spring. Its own name, Brimstone, means sulphur.

The more noticeable and showy butterflies have impressive names like Red Admiral and Purple Emperor or reflect their appearance like Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Orange-tip.

We don't tend to know so many moth names, but I like Old Lady moths which are mottled and grey and live in your sheds over winter (unlike me!) and of course the Chimney Sweeper which is black and feeds on Pignut.

I hope we don't lose our plants and insects as fast as we seem to be losing their names. Next time you see an oak, ash or thorn tree, remember their names are among the most ancient in our language and even provided the names of letters of our alphabet.

To use other Anglo-Saxon words, they are in our hearts.

The poem below was written to a theme chosen by the Withybed Poets earlier this year.

My family and other animals

I am a stone in the pool. In the first circle
These people, my family. I share a nose here, thumb there
History of births and deaths and loves, fathoms deep.
Next ripple, lovers, neighbours, friends
Those who see the dirt of dark times, the beauty
Of sunlight on my house, my heart. Important too
A wider flow: families of work, people who sing in chorus
Those who share walks and carry the banners together.
Further out, a community, known and unknown
Who build my roads and mend my body, keep the light on,
Make my clothes and tables, fuel my poems.
I know I need them, am of them, hope I can fuel them.
Then it's the human world, Putin and all. He is in me.
No-one can be outside this circle. But why stop there?
Circle on circle weave across dimensions.
My animal cousins, plants growing tall and low
Swallows and swifts, wasps and rhinoceros
Roses and dandelions and oaks in my fingers
Bacteria flowering in my gut, fungi underfoot
Everything on this planet, damaged but still green
I am connected into all of these. If I could stand
Outside and look I'd see it and its harmony -
But then I'd see the stars, comets, and planets:
My little stone a speck of dust. Stardust, of course.

Hottest day on record

Alvechurch amateur weatherman **Phil Thomas** records the changes.

July was a dry and very warm month. A gradual build-up of a very hot airstream from the south in the days leading up to July 19, and a high pressure area near to the UK which blocked any cooler Atlantic air from reaching us, led to my site recording the highest screen temperature maximum of 36.8C.

This is highest temperature I have recorded locally since I began records in 1978.

There was no measured rain for 17 days from the July 3 due to the blocking high pressure area. This meant that rainfall was only 13.4mm which is 19% of my 1991-2020 average. Sunshine meanwhile, was near normal for my recordings, 104% of my 1991-2020 average at 177.2 hours.

Similarly, August to date has been a very hot month with little rain, only 5.3mm over the first three days.

Since the 4th, most days were hot and sunny due to a slow moving high pressure area with maximum temperates exceeded 30C over four days from 11-14th August, The average maximum temperature being 27.4C - more than 5.8C above what we would expect to experience.

There did appear to be a change in weather during the second half of the month, returning to average temperatures and rainfall.

July 2022

Mean Max	24.3C	2.2C above average
Mean Min	12.9C	0.7C above average
Mean	18.6C	1.5C above average
Rainfall	13.4mm	19% of average
Sunshine	166.2hrs	104% of average

August 2022 (to the 15th)

Mean Max	27.4C	5.8 above average
Mean Min	13.2C	1.2 above average
Mean	20.3C	3.5 above average
Rainfall	5.3mm	6% of average
Sunshine	133.5 hrs	86% of average

The Outlook

The conditions are likely to become more settled into the start of September.

However temperatures, although likely to be near normal initially, could continue to trend above average further into the period with the chance of occasional warm spells.

Unsettled conditions will dominate in most areas towards the end of the period and into the start of September. The north and west may see periods of rain which could occasionally spread further south and east. Some brighter and more settled periods are also expected across southern parts.

Clockwise from top: Crops growing under a cloudless sky, sunset over Rowney Green, full moon in August, butterflies in sunshine.

More information at ***www.alvechurchweather.metsite.com*** You can see an improved HD weather-cam, updated at one-minute intervals, at: ***www.alvechurchweather.metsite.com/webcam_alvechurch.php***

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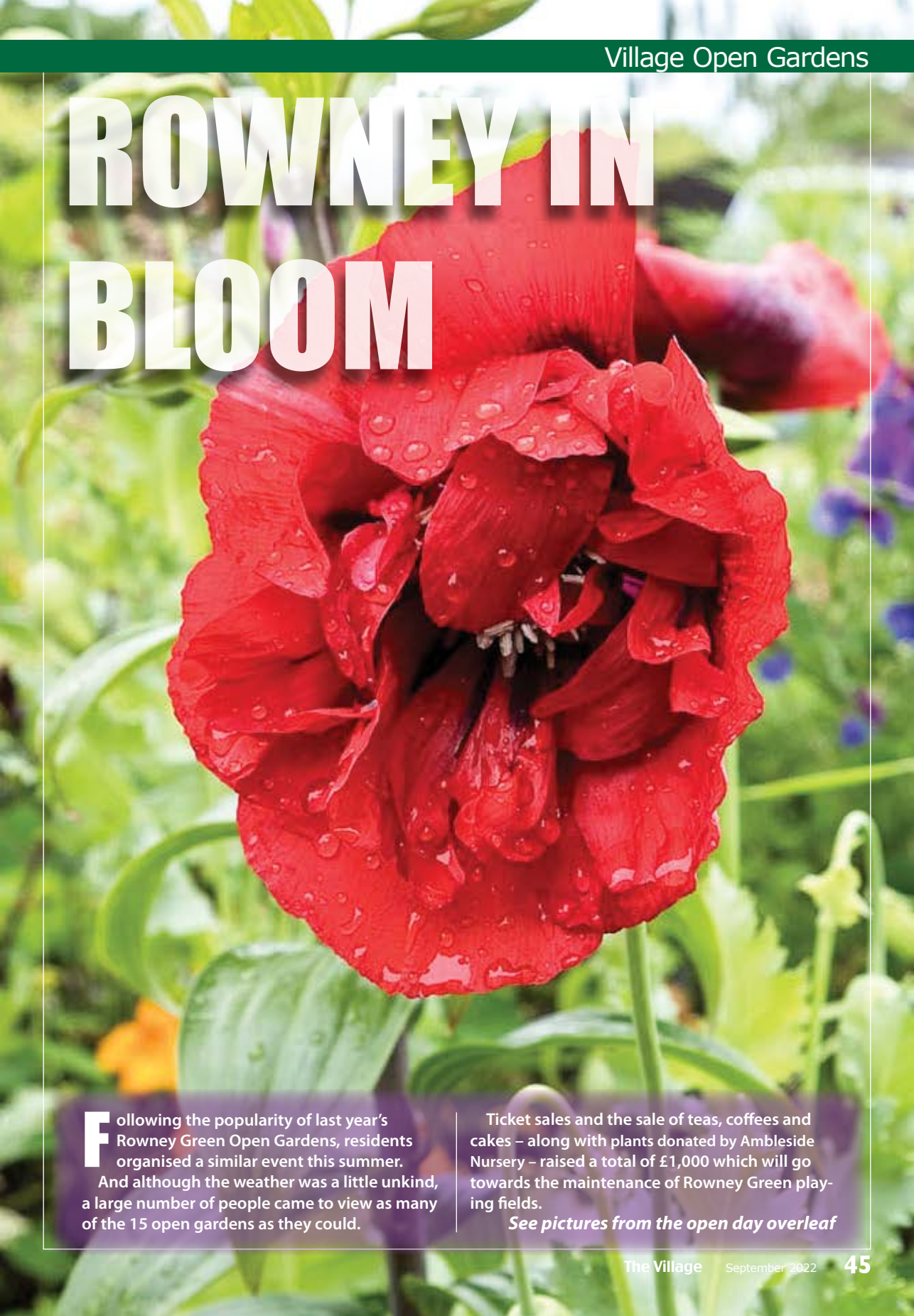
ROWNEY IN BLOOM



Following the popularity of last year's Rowney Green Open Gardens, residents organised a similar event this summer.

And although the weather was a little unkind, a large number of people came to view as many of the 15 open gardens as they could.

Ticket sales and the sale of teas, coffees and cakes – along with plants donated by Ambleside Nursery – raised a total of £1,000 which will go towards the maintenance of Rowney Green playing fields.

See pictures from the open day overleaf

Clockwise from top left:
Dave and Sue Devonshire relaxing in their garden.

One of the lovely views to be found from many gardens in Rowney Green.

Beautiful fuschia flowers and buds.

Tiered gravel steps leading to an archway covered in foliage.

Visitors enjoy the view over Rowney Green fields.

Janet Corfield in her brightly coloured flowerbeds with Rowney residents Maggie and Rynagh.

Photography by Michael Corfield

Above: Shirley Ann, who helped organise the event, with visitors taking a break.
Right: Vibrant wildflower gardens.

EVENTS

ALVECHURCH KNIT AND NATTER are holding a table-top sale of their products outside The Lounge in the village centre on September 17 from 10am-2pm. All proceeds will be donated to The Lounge and the Brain Tumour Research.

ST GODWALD'S Community Cafe meets every other Fri from 10am–noon at St Godwald's Room adjacent to the Church Hall, Finstall Road, Bromsgrove. Extra safety measures are in place. Friendship, cake, tea/coffee. Donations welcome— monies to St Basil's charity for homeless youngsters. More info: davidrowe876@btinternet.com

MUSIC

ALVECHURCH COMMUNITY CHOIR usually meets in the Village Hall on Mondays at 7.30pm with occasional outdoor sessions and a live stream for members who aren't able yet to meet indoors. The choir is inclusive and open to everyone, whether you think you can sing or not. For more information or to join, see our website www.alvechurchcommunitychoir.org.uk. We start our new term on 5 September in the Village Hall and you can see us at St Laurence Church Heritage Day, 10 September.

BEL CANTO SINGERS, the well-known 4-part Worcestershire choir, are back to rehearsals at St. John's Church, Greenlands Avenue Redditch B98 7PZ on Monday evenings. They are always happy to welcome new singers. They have a very wide and varied repertoire and a huge catalogue to include pop, fun pieces, musical theatre, jazz, folk music and traditional choral and classical music along with much more.
Bel Canto Singers are a friendly and social group, under the guidance of Musical Director, Liz Green and accompanist, Wendy Quirk. They are a non-profit making organisation and select a new charity each year to support both financially and with provision of their services. Just turn up at rehearsal on Mondays at 7.30pm where there will be a wide range of singing activities, light refreshments and chat. More information please contact Secretary Veronica Porter 07885 507899 or visit www.belcantosingers.org.uk

THE GEMINI Choir is seeking new singers. Info from Philip Morris on 07969 741137.

BLACKWELL Concert Band and Training Band is open to all brass and woodwind players of all abilities. To learn more about the band, book them, or find details of upcoming events, email blackwellconcertband98@gmail.com or visit www.blackwellconcertband.co.uk

SINGING For Health is an online group aimed specifically at people with health problems, mental or physical. It's fortnightly and completely free – all you need is a printer and a suitable device (laptop, phone etc). It's not a choir, and after the initial catch-up, everyone mutes so the only people who can hear you are those you live with! More info from Ruth on mail@ruthmwood.co.uk

BROMSGROVE Music Centre runs weekly sessions for young brass, wind, and string instrument players to enjoy being part of a group who rehearse and perform together. New members always welcome! Sessions are run by Severn Arts at St John's Middle School, Bromsgrove, on Mondays 5.45–6.45pm. Individual instrumental and vocal lessons are also provided at the centre. For more info and to sign up, see www.severnarts.org.uk/music-centre-groups

BROMSGROVE Folk Club meets on the second and last Thurs every month at Catshill Club, starting at 8pm. For a full list of events call Bob Bignell on 0121 476 5938 or see www.bromsgrovefolkclub.co.uk

BROMSGROVE Rock Choir offers everyone the chance to sing pop, rock and chart songs – no audition needed. Free taster sessions available. More info at www.rockchoir.com or on 01252 714276.

BROMSGROVE Community Choir meets on Thurs evenings, 6–7 pm at Bromsgrove Methodist Church (main church hall). They sing for fun and enjoyment; everyone welcome, singers or not. Contact Ruth Henley for details on 01527 527022 or 07812 145267, or email r.g.henley@btinternet.com

DANCING

TANGO Argentino Thursdays in Barnt Green. In the Friends Meeting House. For further information: https://www.facebook.com/groups/tango42

AELFGYTHE Border Morris is seeking new dancers (female) and musicians (male or female) to join them for fun, exercise and dancing. They meet at 7.45pm every Weds in Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall. Everyone welcome. Come and play traditional folk music, or try Morris dancing. For more details call Pam on 07961 830 831.

FRENCH & Breton folk dancing meets at Alvechurch Village Hall on the first Sat each month from 2.30–5pm (Covid-dependent, so please check first by emailing alvechurchfrenchdance@gmail.com). Informal tuition and live music provided. New dancers (and musicians) welcome. £2 per session.

ALVECHURCH Morris Men are on the lookout for new dancers and musicians. They practise on Mondays at Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall, 8.30–10pm, followed by a "debrief" at a local hostelry. They dance in local towns and at various local and national events, and perform a world-famous (sort of) mummers play in the village every New Year's Day.
No ability, fitness or co-ordination required – if you are male, 18+ and prepared to spend more time than is probably good for you in public houses, pop along to meet the group! Drop in to any practice, contact Steve on 07375 592928 or email: alvechurchbagman@gmail.com

NANCY Butterfly Morris Dancers dance in the North-West Morris style (clogs!) and practise at Catshill Methodist Church Hall on Monday evenings ready to meet up with other Morris sides for social events and festivals. They are very happy to welcome new adult dancers and musicians. See: www.nancybutterfly.co.uk or Facebook for what they get up to. You can contact them via the website or Jane on 07726 915289.

AVONCROFT Folk Dance Group enjoys anything from barn dances to ones seen in *Pride & Prejudice* or *Poldark*. All welcome, no need to have a partner. The group meets every Thurs from 8–10pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Redditch Road, Bromsgrove B60 4JR. £2.50 incl refreshments. Info from Liz Stanton on 01905 353995 or liz@the-stantons.uk or visit www.avoncroftfdg.weebly.com

SEQUENCE Ballroom and Latin dancing every Mon evening at 8pm at the Longbridge Social Club, 1012 Bristol Road South, Northfield. Occasional free tuition. All welcome to a friendly fun-filled dance. Details from Kalvin on 07725 265024.

BJ's BUSY Boots Line Dancing Classes: Tues 2–3pm Bromsgrove Leisure Centre; 7–10pm Stoke Prior Sports/Country Club. Thurs 1.15–3.30pm Bromsgrove Methodist Church Centre. Social Dance usually 1st Sat in month at All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane. It's a fun way to exercise. For more details phone Brenda on 01527 870151.

AMY Greaves School of Dance & Fitness offers a variety of classes for toddler up to adults. Based in Hopwood, Bournville and Longbridge. Contact 07979408997 amygreaves1@hotmail.co.uk www.amygreavesschoolofdance.com

CLUBS, GROUPS & SOCIETIES

BROMSGROVE Men In Sheds is a group for anyone (male or female) who has retired or been made redundant and wants to spend time with like-minded people. The group meets Mon–Thurs, 10am–2pm at Unit 1, Metals & Ores Industrial Estate, Stoke Prior B60 4JZ. You can find more information by calling 01527 570490 or email enquiries@ageukbrwf.org.uk

PLACES OF WELCOME is a growing network of local community groups who provide their neighbourhoods with places where all people can feel safe and where they can connect, belong and contribute.
You can now find one of these hubs in Alvechurch. The network is open in

WHAT'S ON GUIDE

HERITAGE OPEN DAY

ST LAURENCE CHURCH AND THE ARK will be opening their doors on Saturday 10th September for a brand new – and hopefully annual – event, a Heritage Open Day.

Open days are taking place nationally, and St Laurence and The Ark will be hosting activities and demonstrations from 10am until 5pm including morris dancers, Alvechurch Middle School Year 5 singers and guided tours, along with much more. Visitors will also be able to enjoy a BBQ, beers and cakes along with "Pimm's and hymns".

St Laurence Church and The Ark on Wednesdays 10.30am-12pm, however you may find these in many different places such as community centres or libraries, and all are open to everyone and offer friendship and hospitality, free refreshments and local knowledge about the neighbourhood. Visit www.placesofwelcome.org.uk or email info@placesofwelcome.org.uk

REDDITCH Military History Society usually meets monthly in St Luke's Church Hall (Evesham Road, Redditch, B97 4JX), 7 for 7.30pm. More info from Ron on 01527 545450 or ronnieg33b@hotmail.co.uk

FRIENDS Of Bittell Reservoirs is a group of local people interested in preserving the natural environment of the Site of Special Scientific Interest at Upper Bittell, Lower Bittell and Mill Shrub reservoirs, which are important staging posts for migrant birds and wildlife. If you have an interest in preserving this unique environment and would like to help in its preservation and maintenance, contact: Charles Deverill on cdjd26@gmail.com

ALVECHURCH Village Society runs a regular programme of social events and guided walks, as well as maintaining local footpaths. Full details at www.alvechurchvs.org or contact Chairperson Chris Miall via R.C.Miall@bham.ac.uk AVS is always pleased to welcome new members—contact Martin on 07742 100007 or martinclarke1@btinternet.com

REDDITCH Community Shed is a project that encourages skills, combats loneliness, and provides a sense of worth. The group is now in new premises, and you can find more details at www.redditchcommunityshed.co.uk or on Facebook.

THE MONDAY Fellowship group meets at the Parish Centre behind St Andrew's Church in Barnt Green at 2.30pm on the second Monday every month; £2 to include tea and biscuits and an interesting talk. Info: Maureen Frowley on 0121 445 0880.

INNER WHEEL Club of Redditch welcomes you to its monthly meetings on 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Southcrest Hotel Redditch. An international Women's Organisation, we enjoy a bit of everything; walks, talks, days & evenings out, and everything in between whilst at the same time helping our community. Contact Anne Robertson for information 07580351361. Or email redditch.innerwheel@gmail.com or visit www.innerwheel.co.uk

BROMSGROVE U3A: No longer in full time work? Activity/interest groups and speaker meetings are happening throughout the month. Check website for details: www.u3asites.org.uk/bromsgrove/home

BROMSGROVE & Redditch Welcomes Refugees is a group of volunteers supporting local refugees who arrived under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Relocation Scheme (SVPRS). New volunteers always needed – training and support given. BRWR is open to all, irrespective of political or religious belief. Full details at www.brwr.uk

CATSHILL Carers and Bereavement Back Up Group is a group set up specifically to offer respite, socialising and occasional speakers to carers and bereaved in the area. It meets on the last Tues each month in the coffee bar area of Catshill Methodist Church Centre in Golden Cross Lane from 2.30pm for about 1.5hrs. All carers and bereaved welcome, as well as those who used to care for someone who has passed away or is now in a care facility. Tea and biscuits/cake provided – no charge. Contact Sheila (0121 445 2813) or Di (0121 445 3595) for details and encouragement.

BROMSGROVE Speakers Club meets at The Barn at The Bell at Belbroughton every other Tues, 7.45–10pm. Everyone who wants to gain confidence in public speaking is welcome, but you must book in advance via www.bromsgrovespeakers.org.uk, which also contains full details of events.

RE-ENGAGE (formerly Contact the Elderly) aims to help isolated elderly people by offering monthly tea parties where they can reconnect or make new friends in their own community. If you know of an elderly person who could benefit, please get in touch on 07539 276054. Guests need to be aged over 75 and living alone, and must be mobile enough to walk to a driver's car with assistance. Find general info at www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk and details of the local group @ContacttheElderlyRedditch on Facebook.

BROMSGROVE Photographic Society is a friendly, active and mutually supportive club for those keen to learn about, or improve, their photographic and digital imaging skills. The growing membership has skills ranging from novice to highly skilled, within wide-ranging subjects. The club meets on Tues nights, 8-10pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre. For more info, vis-

continues overleaf

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it www.bromsgroveps.com or see Facebook and Twitter.

ROTARY Club of Bromsgrove meets every 2nd Tues of the month at Maekong Thai Restaurant, and every 4th Tues at Bromsgrove School, both 7pm for 7.30pm. New members welcome. For more info visit www.bromsgroverotary.org.uk or contact Ron Pearce on 07703 567982.

HEART Of England Speakers is a friendly public speaking club, based in Solihull. It is affiliated to Toastmasters International, and meets on the 1st and 3rd Tues of each month, 7.30—9.30pm, at the Silhillians Sports Club and Events Centre, as well as via Zoom. If you would like to boost your confidence get in touch via www.heartspeakers.org.uk, Instagram @toastmastersheartofengland, or via LinkedIn.

BARNT Green Parish Centre has large and medium sized lounges available for regular hire for some morning and early afternoon sessions each week. Please contact the Parish Administrator on 0121 447 7097.

MIDLAND Ancestors have resumed monthly meetings at Bromsgrove Methodist Centre (19 Stratford Road, Bromsgrove, B60 1AS). More info at: www.bromsgrovebmsgh.co.uk

LICKEY Valley Trefoil Guild, as a branch of the Guide Association, is open to anyone over the age of 18. Make new friends, travel, explore, serve the community and help Guiding and Scouting in your area. The Guild meets at Barnt Green Scout & Guide Centre (off Blackwell Road, Barnt Green, B45 8BT) every second Weds from 2-4pm. For more info call 0121 445 3907 or 0121 445 2813 or visit www.trefoilguild.co.uk

REDDITCH Rotary Club meets Monday lunchtimes at the Abbey Hotel, Hither Green Lane, Redditch, B98 9BE. You would be very welcome to join in. Want to be involved, hear interesting speakers, and serve your community? Want to know more? Contact Peter Williams on 01527 60277.

LICKEY PHAB Club is a social club where people aged 14 and over, with and without disabilities, can come together each week to have fun! It is affiliated to national charity Phab. The club meets every Mon from 7.30–9.30pm at The Trinity Centre, Lickey Parish Hall to have fun, play games, do crafts or just chat – there's also a tuck shop! More info from Louise Boother on 07814 122990 or lickeyphabclub@hotmail.com

BEACON Ladies Club meets at 8pm on alternate Weds evenings at The Hawthorns Social Club, Rednal Hill Lane, Rednal. There is a varied programme of speakers and outings, including occasional visits to the theatre. New members of all ages welcome. £12 annual membership, plus £2 fortnightly. Call Barbara on 0121 445 3456 or Anita on 445 3770.

THE WHEEL community room in Blackwell has daytime, evening and weekend availability for one-off and regular hire —more info on 0121 445 1425.

THE TRINITY Centre in Lickey has evening and weekend availability for one-off and regular hire – more info on 0121 445 1425.

BARNT Green Friendship Club meets every 2nd Tues of the month at 2.15pm at the Friends Meeting House, Barnt Green. Visitors £3 to include tea and biscuits. Members 50p. Ladies and gents both welcome. For more details call Rosalind on 0121 445 0598.

THE WORCESTER-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society are currently holding meetings online on the first Tues of each month at 7.45pm. There is usually a guest speaker. Non-members are very welcome to join in. Log-in details are always posted on the society website: www.wbdcs.org.uk and Facebook page: @wbdcs.org.uk

THE WEDNESDAY Club usually meets on the second Weds each month at Alvechurch Cricket Club at 1.30pm, and offers the chance to make new friends, meet old ones and enjoy talks, demos and visits. September 14 is their Annual Skittle Match. Info from Janet on 0121 447 7870 or Lis on 0121 445 3895.

COFFEE, Cake and Chat is a place to meet new friends or catch up with old friends (includes a dedicated baby area) on the 4th Friday of each month 10:30am - 12noon at The Wheel, Blackwell. No charge, donations welcome. More info on 0121 445 1425.

BROMSGROVE (1982) PROBUS Club provides regular opportunities for retired professionals and businessmen to meet socially and share common interests. A members' meeting is held at Avoncroft Arts Centre on the 3rd Weds each month, 10am–12noon, including refreshments and a talk by a guest speaker. For more info visit www.bromsgroveprobus.co.uk or contact Jim on 01527 833531 bromsgrove1982probus.weebley.com

KINGFISHER PROBUS Club of Redditch is recruiting retired and semi-retired men to join them in a friendly environment. They meet every 2nd Thurs of the month at 11.30am at the Court Leet,174 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove B61 7AY, with a short meeting at noon then lunch followed by an interesting talk given by a visiting speaker. Partners/friends welcome to join for walks, trips, golf, skittles and special lunches. Contact Chris Bailey on 01527 835802 for confirmation of date and venue. More info at www.kingfisherprobusredditch.co.uk

LICKEY Hills Local History Society meets monthly at 7.30pm in the Trinity Centre, Old Birmingham Road, Lickey B45 8ES. Annual subscription £15. Non-members £3 per meeting. For more information please email info@lhlhs.org.uk or visit the website: www.lhlhs.org.uk

BROMSGROVE & Redditch Soroptimists meets every 2nd Thurs of the month at Burcot Village Hall. New members welcome – pop to a meeting, email sibrsoroptimist@gmail.com or ring 07812 985927.

ALVECHURCH Historical Society has a planned programme of talks on the first Monday of the month at 7.45pm at The Ark, St Laurence Church, Alvechurch. More details from Anne Humphries on 0121 445 5955. New members welcome.

TARDEBIGGE COMMUNITY Hall for hire: large, bright facility for functions, clubs, societies and all activities. To book call 07763 446902 or email tchbookings@gmail.com

BROMSGROVE Astronomical Society meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at Bromsgrove Rugby Club (Finstall Road, B60 3DH). Doors open 7.30pm, speakers begin 7.45pm. Admission free on your first visit; refreshments available. Observing meetings are also held on the first Monday each month – bring your telescopes. More info on 01527 908331 or www.broms-astro.org.uk

ROTARY CLUB of Lickey Hills meets on Monday evenings, 7.15 for 7.30pm, at Hillscourt Conference Centre (NASUWT headquarters) on Rose Hill (B45 8RS). For details contact Graham Wiseman on 0121 460 1402.

SILVER THREADS, the Alvechurch club, meets on the first Weds each month at 2pm in Alvechurch Village Hall. You'll be sure of a welcome in this friendly atmosphere, where members can chat over a cup of tea. There are regular bingo sessions, and occasional days out. New members welcome. More info from Pat on 0121 447 8630.

WOODRUSH RUGBY Club "Old Dogs" meet at 8pm on the 2nd Thurs in the month at the Clubhouse, Icknield Street, 01564 822878. Open to all former players, social members and old friends for a social chat and the odd reminisce over a glass of beer. Join us: call Mike Betts on 07960 303254 or visit www.woodrushrfc.co.uk or info@woodrushrfc.co.uk

THE MACULAR Society Barnt Green Support Group meets on the last Fri of the month (with some exceptions) at The Parish Centre, behind St Andrew's Church, Sandhills Road, Barnt Green, B45 8NR, 2–4pm. Friendly, self-help group, proving there is more to life than this devastating eye condition. New members always welcome. For more info, ring Wendy on 0121 445 1585 or Alan on 01527 877864.

HOPWOOD VILLAGE Hall is available for hire for parties, groups and gatherings. Please contact Booking Secretary Ann Thurrell on

0121 447 7668 or visit www.hopwoodvillagehall.co.uk

BROMSGROVE PHOTOGRAPHICAL Society has hit the ground running, following their successful indoor Winter Season at Avoncroft Arts Centre, with the launch of the Summer Season. Members are taken far and wide with cameras at the ready, and the Summer Programme Officer has set out a varied list of locations to explore. It's a great opportunity to leave the cares of the world at home and be in the moment, in a beautiful and interesting location. You'll learn more plenty and there are plenty of experienced photographers to advise those just starting out. Visit www.bromsgroveps.com or email bpscontact1@gmail.com

SPORT, FITNESS & HEALTH

UPTON WARREN SAILING CLUB sails throughout the year at Aztec (Upton Warren) opposite Webb's Garden Centre, Wychbold. A small, friendly club with both mixed fleet racing and cruising sessions. Most members sail their own boats but there are also club boats available for members to use. See www.uwsc.co.uk to find out more or contact membership@uwsc.co.uk

WOODRUSH RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB, Icknield Street, Alvechurch, B38 0EL is recruiting: Senior (Men & Ladies) U17 Colts Mini/Junior & Micros. Call 07341 256821 for recruitment or 01564 822878 (Clubhouse) email info@woodushrfc.co.uk or see: www.drushrfc.co.uk Facebook @WoodrushRFC

ALVECHURCH Village Society's walks are held at 2pm of the first Sunday of the month unless noted otherwise. For walks starting outside the village, contact the walk leader if you need a lift. Weather conditions occasionally mean that a walk must be cancelled: check with the leaders if necessary. Wear appropriate footwear. The next walk will be on 4 September at 2pm, looking at the history of Kings Norton. Meet at Kings Norton Playing Fields car park B30, 3EU. Contact Lyn & Tony 07763468893.

BARNT GREEN FISHING CLUB controls the fishing (both game and coarse) on the Bittell Reservoirs. Interested parties - contact: bgfcmembership@outlook.com or Facebook@Barnt Green Fishing Club.

REDDITCH & Bromsgrove Company of Archers meet April–Sept, Mon 6.30pm and Fri 6.30pm at Meadow Park Football Ground (by Harris Brush Works – outdoors) and Oct–March on Fri 6.30pm at Studley Leisure Centre (indoors).

Really friendly no-pressure club. New members always welcome (juniors from 8 years old, seniors from 18 to 80+, seasoned archers or absolute beginners). Beginners' courses run throughout the year or taster sessions by appointment. Further info from rbcoaCoach@gmail.com, rbcoasecretary@gmail.com, or www.redditcharchers.org

REDDITCH Ramblers is a growing, friendly and sociable group offering a full walks programme including walks every Sat and Sun and a midweek walk most weeks. Sun walk is usually 6–9 miles; the Sat walk is more challenging, usually 10–12 miles. Midweek walks vary, sometimes morning walks followed by option of lunch or full day walking.

The Saturday Strollers walk fortnightly (4–5 miles). Newcomers are always welcome and can walk three times with the group before deciding if they want to join. The group also arranges holidays, coach trips and social events throughout the year. Full info at redditch.ramblers@gmail.com or www.redditchramblers.org.uk

PHYSIOTHERAPY-LED Pilates Classes in Cofton Hackett, Barnt Green and the Lickey Hills. Mixed ability Daytime and Evening classes available. Mother & Baby classes also run by Women's Health Physiotherapists. Small and welcoming classes aimed to improve balance, muscle tone and posture as well as overall body strength. Contact Elizabeth on 07850 604425 or elizabethalexanderltd@gmail.com or see www.elizabethalexanderphysiotherapy.com

CLUBBERCISE@ Alvechurch: Get sweat and glow! Get ready for exercise in disguise. You'll be dancing yourself happy and sweating until you sparkle, without even realising it. Mondays 7.30–8.30pm at Alvechurch School. All places MUST be pre-booked via www.leeshfitness.co.uk or 07541 625939.

POUND FITNESS@ Alvechurch: Channel your inner rockstar with this full body cardio-jam session. Using Ripstix®, lightly-weighted drumsticks engineered specifically for exercising, POUND transforms drumming into an incredibly effective way of working out. Weds 7.30–8.15pm at Alvechurch School. All places MUST be pre-booked via www.leeshfitness.co.uk or 07541 625939.

RELAXATION & MEDITATION for Everyone. Short, welcoming & inclusive classes with an experienced teacher at The Ark, Alvechurch, and online. An experiential approach to relaxation and meditation for a calm, clear mind and relaxed, balanced outlook. For more information, contact Sally: www.MyYogaMind.co.uk, classes@MyYogaMind.co.uk, 07903 663085.

BARNT GREEN Sailing Club offers regular sailing, either racing or casual sailing, in beautiful surroundings at Upper Bittell reservoir. For info, contact secretary@bgsc.uk or see www.sailingbarntgreen.com

BRIAR Rose Field Archers is a field archery club based near Bromsgrove. There are two qualified coaches for those interested in taking up the sport. For information contact briarrosefieldarchers@gmail.com

YOGA Really Works: classes on Thurs evenings (term-time only), 7–8pm @Cotteridge Quaker Meeting House, Watford Road. Six-week blocks £45. Slow and mindful rhythmic movement in time with the breath. Ends in seated/lying down relaxation. Accessible venue— classes open to wheelchair uses and less abled persons. Contact George on 07490 781637 or yogareallyworks@outlook.com, see www.yogareallyworks.co.uk or Facebook @Yogareallyworks

THE RAMBLERS Bromsgrove Group: Guided walking with our group for pleasure, fitness and fun. Full programme of walks / events throughout the year. More info at www.bromsgroveramblers.webs.com or Martin on 01527 857117 or Peter on 01527 558203.

ALVECHURCH WALKING Buddies: join a regular local walk with like-minded people who simply want to go on a local, sedate and friendly walk with no pressure. Well-behaved owners and their dogs are very welcome. The group meets at 10.30am every Thurs. For more info, search for 'alvwb' on Facebook or contact Tony on 07763 468893.

SOCIAL TENNIS takes place at Rubery Community & Leisure Centre, Holywell Lane, Rubery B45 9AD on Mondays from 1–3pm. The group would welcome a few more players – just turn up or ring Don on 01527 759 318 for further details.

SARACEN Cycling Club is seeking new members. Men, ladies, beginners, and regular riders are all welcome. The long-established club meets regularly by the Tardebigge Pub on Thurs at 10am and Sun at 9.45am. See www.saracenroadclub.com or call Ivor on 0121 453 2287.

LONGBRIDGE Cycling Club meets weekly on Tues and either Sat or Sun. Ride pace generally at 9-11mph overall average, varied distances. Hotel and hostel weekends away, cycle camping adventures, social outings and much more. All ages, beginners, and seasoned cyclists all welcome. Call or text Deb on 07738 982161, email debweston@aol.com or see www.longbridgecyclingclub.com or Facebook @longbridgecyclingclub

MERCIAN Nordic Walking: come and try a taster session for fun, fitness and friendship. More info at www.merciannordicwalking.co.uk Online fitness and personal training available at www.mercianfitness.co.uk

ALVECHURCH Cricket Club Pavilion is available for hire: weekdays for community groups/clubs/societies, evening functions/private parties. Licensed bar, dance floor, kitchen area and great outdoor space. Enquiries to Stuart Brereton via 07775 714165 or ahcc.bar@gmail.com

PILATES Mat classes and 1:1 (apparatus). Irrespective of age, lifestyle, health and ability, we could all benefit from listening to our

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bodies: tuning in to our needs, building connections throughout the body, focusing on detail; challenging what is strong, building what is weaker, balancing the body to move away from pain and discomfort towards greater resilience and independence. Steff has 15 years' experience teaching Pilates full time. Book a 1:1 apparatus session (Barnt Green) or a mat class (Rowney Green). Call 07759 590830 or see www.steffaffleck.co.uk

BARNT Green Sports Club (Margesson Drive, Barnt Green, B45 8LR) offers racquet sports in a friendly environment, plus running and cycling groups. Clubhouse with licensed bar. More info from Nick Butcher on 0121 445 1978 or visit www.barntgreensportsclub.co.uk

CATSHILL FC offers youth coaching sessions each Saturday morning at Catshill Middle School, Meadow Road, Catshill, B61 0JW. Boys and girls from Reception age upwards are welcome. Contact Gary on 07462 118920 or see www.catshillfc.co.uk for further info.

BROMSGROVE & REDDITCH Badminton Club welcomes players for social and league play. Playing Sunday evenings 5.40 to 7.40pm. Details from Steve Whittaker 07805 051456.

PILATES with Lottie Newberry: Physiotherapy-led Pilates classes every Mon evening in Barnt Green Baptist Church. All abilities welcome. Contact Lottie on 07968 450673 or lottienewberrypilates@hotmail.com

COMMUNITY Exercise Classes at Alvechurch Baptist Church, run by Bromsgrove council: Active Seniors on Tues 9.30–10.30am. and Zumba Gold on Thurs 1–2pm (each £3.50 per session). There will be some new things to get used to in the Covid-safe environment, with fully-qualified, insured instructors on hand to help. For more info, call 01527 881289 or visit at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/things-to-do/active-bromsgrove

YOGA for Every-Body. Friendly & Inclusive classes in Blackwell, Alvechurch and online with an experienced teacher. A slow but powerful approach to yoga, which encourages free, natural alignment of the body, whilst building strength, flexibility and relaxed awareness. Contact Sally: www.MyYogaMind.co.uk, classes@MyYogaMind.co.uk, 07903 663085.

TAI CHI (Qigong) sessions in Alvechurch Village Hall on Mon 10–11am and Friday 10.30. Qigong is an integration of physical postures, breathing techniques, and focused intentions. More details Nige on 07966 069956 or nige@mindfulmoves.co.uk

FIVE WAYS Old Edwardians' Cricket Club at Ash Lane, Hopwood: Junior, Men's and Women's teams, come and join in! Open to all. Excellent facilities. Everyone welcome.

LET THE ALVECHURCH GAMES BEGIN

ALVECHURCH GAMES EVENING at the Baptist Church was never going to match the Commonwealth Games with its multi-million pound budget and global advertising, just a few miles up the road in Birmingham.

However on 30 July 2022 the church held a multi-event Team Challenge night to mark the "once in a lifetime" occasion which has brought world-leading athletes from across the Commonwealth to the Midlands, some even staying locally. With events such as Balloon Shot Putt and Paper-plate Discus there was a requirement for inventive and special skills, and much fun to be found in the trying (and failing!) of new methods.

When all the games had been attempted and while scores were calculated, Caribbean and Canadian food choices were served and enjoyed by competitors and spectators, followed by a Queen and Commonwealth Quiz. A Team Prize-giving and Individual Medal Ceremony finished the evening which had brought a happy time for many villagers and guests.

Coaching for juniors on Fri evenings May to Aug. Contact Mark Tovey on 01527 835031.

NEW Ravens (North East Worcestershire Ravens Rugby League Club) is now based at Forshaw Heath Lane, Portway, B94 5LH. Junior training and 'little leaguers' take place on Sun mornings from 10.30am, with open-age and touch on Weds evenings from 7pm. All welcome at this family-orientated club. Contact Gail on 07515 020844 or Jason on 07957 248464 visit www.newravens.net

KINGS Norton Rhinos offers contact and non-contact rugby for children from Reception to Year 12. A safe and friendly introduction to rugby – and plenty of outdoor fun and exercise! Training takes place at KNRFC Ash Lane, Hopwood, on Sundays from 9.30–11.30am. Contact Simon Thompson on 07968 424585 or visit www.knrfc.co.uk

HOPWOOD Ladies Cycling Club meets at Hopwood Playing Field on Tuesdays at 11.30am and Wednesdays at 9.30am. For more information, visit www.hopwoodladiescyclingclub.co.uk or phone Sheila Evans on 07779 530017.

MARTIAL ARTS Kickboxing/Karate at The Ark Tuesdays 6.30-7.30. For more information please visit www.forcecombatmartialarts.co.uk

ASSERTIVENESS AND HELPING SKILLS Donington Training runs classes at Alvechurch Village Hall. Easy, enjoyable and effective learning. Wednesdays from 19th January, pay what you think and can afford, any profits go to The Village Hall. For info: http://tinyurl.com/DTcdates or John Talbut (0121) 445 4607.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

BABY Bounce & Rhyme is at Alvechurch Library Mondays 10–10.30am. Sing-a-long to traditional nursery rhymes and action songs.

STORYTIME at Alvechurch Library is on Tuesdays 11–11.30. Silly stories and tall tales for pre-school children to enjoy with parents and carers.

DRAMA TOTS classes are at Alvechurch Baptist Church hall every term time Monday and at Bromsgrove Rugby Club, Finstall, term-time Thursdays. Rising Stars classes for 18 months-3 years are at 9.30-10.10am, Bright Stars classes for 3 and 4 year olds are 10.30-11.15am. See www.dramatots.co.uk for more information.

TINY CHURCH (stay and play for under-5s and their carer) meets in Holy Trinity Church, Lickey, each Weds from 11.15am–12.30pm during term times. Games, toys, snacks and stories, and a time to meet together with

God. Just pop along, ring 0121 445 1425 or email clive.rushton@btinternet.com

EVERY SCOUT Group in Bromsgrove (which includes Barnt Green, Blackwell, Catshill, Finstall and Lickey as well as the town centre) currently has girls and boys aged 6-18 waiting to join, their numbers restricted by the ratio of adults to young people.

A few more adults helping would enable existing leaders to open more Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer units allowing more young people to experience Scouting and learn skills for life. If you could spare a few hours each month please contact us on 07539 031740 or visit scoutshw.org.uk

THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST (NCT) runs ever-popular antenatal and postnatal courses to grow your knowledge and your network, allowing you to feel prepared and confident moving into the next chapter of your life. Discover and learn with other local parents-to-be, make vital connections and life-long friends in your community. Courses are held at St Andrew's Church, Barnt Green. Visit www.nct.org.uk/courses-workshops or call 0300 330 0700.

ROWNEY Green Pre-school offers learning through play for children from two years to school age, Tues–Thurs 9am–2pm, term-time only. Call 07522 926286 or see Facebook.

SOLIHULL Baby Massage is at Rowney Green Village Hall on Tuesday's. A relaxed environment for parents and babies to bond through massage. Follow them on social media for more information or visit www.solihullbabymassage.co.uk

NEW ROAD Parents Support for parents of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans children meets monthly in Bromsgrove. A confidential, voluntary, small support group for parents by parents. Close links with FFLAG. Visit www.newroadparents.org, email newroadparents@gmail.com or get in touch via Facebook @New Road Parents Lgbtqi+ Support Group.

FINSTALL Pre-school in Finstall Village Hall, Mon–Thur 9.15am–1pm (term-time only). Led by a qualified teacher. Visits welcome. Call 07903 560787 or email Finstallpreschool@hotmail.com

THEATRETRAIN Bromsgrove, performing arts for children 4-18yrs. Saturdays 10.30am-1.30pm. For a half-price trial email bromsgrove@theatretrain.co.uk or call 07766 724834.

GAMES & COMPETITIONS

SHIRLEY & Wythall Chess Club meets at Wythall Community Association in Silver Street, Wythall, B47 6LZ, every Thurs from 7.30pm. The club has four teams playing in competitive leagues. Friendly atmosphere. New players are most welcome, just turn up or contact Barry Knee on 01564 826250

SPADESBOURNE Bridge Club plays at Amphlett Hall, Crown Close, Bromsgrove B61 8DW. Join the group for friendly bridge in a pleasant venue on Thurs evenings, 7pm for a 7.15 start. They aim to finish by 10pm. Table money for visitors is £3. Details from Jan on 01905 772256.

MONDAY Bridge Club at Barnt Green Friends Meeting House would like to welcome a few new members – for more info contact the organiser, Des Clarke, on 0121 453 3034.

BROMSGROVE Bridge Club plays every Tuesday evening from 7.25 to 10.30pm at The Court Leet (a Hungry Horse Pub) 174 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove, B61 7AY.We are a very friendly club and welcome guests or potential new members, with or without a partner. The club is affiliated to the English Bridge Union and the Worcestershire Contract Bridge Association. Contact the Secretary, Sally Flood, on 01527 832468 or sallyflood@gmail.com

BROMSGROVE Board Gamers is a friendly group which meets at 7.30pm each Weds at the Ladybird Inn, Aston Fields. More info on Facebook 'Bromsgrove Board Gamers'.

BARNT Green Duplicate Bridge Club meets at St Andrew's Church Hall each Weds afternoon and would like new members – contact Liz on 07538 092296.

ART, CRAFT & LITERATURE

THE WITHYBED POETS are local people who write poetry and share it with each other. You don't have to be in Withybed Green, though most of their meetings are there. They are now back to meeting regularly every six weeks or so. They like to read to local audiences and some write "poetry on request" as they did at Picnic in the Park in June. For more information, contact mail@marygreen.plus.com

PAINTING & DRAWING If you enjoy painting and drawing, try this friendly community group which meets in the Rubery Leisure Centre, Holywell Lane, on Monday mornings, 9am-1pm, catering for all ages and abilities. The facilities are excellent for both indoor and outdoor working depending on personal preference and weather conditions. Tea and coffee is provided. Places are available. For further information telephone: 0121 453 7716 (Fridays).

COMMON THREAD: Bring your knitting, crochet, patchwork, sewing etc. All are welcome. Friendly help and chat. Meets on the last Saturday of each month (apart from Christmas Day, of course!) in The Wheel at St. Catherine's, Blackwell B60 1BN. Please bring your own drink to stay covid safe. Further information from Angela Bevan 0121 477 9924.

THE "CRAFTY Ladies" craft group meets every Monday morning in Alvechurch Library from 10am–1pm, with knitting, crocheting, sewing, quilting etc. More info on 01905 822722.

BURCOT Woodturning Club offers a friendly meeting place for woodturners of all abilities and experience. A varied programme includes demos, talks, hands-on practical evenings and visits to exhibitions. The group meets on the first Thurs each month, 7.15–9.30pm at Burcot Village Hall. Visit www.burcotwoodturners.org.uk

ALVECHURCH Library is available to host day and short courses such as card-making or scrapbooking. If you have a skill to teach or share and would like to rent a space, call the Hub on 01905 822722 and ask for Alvechurch Library.

AVONCROFT Arts Society at Avoncroft Arts Centre (Redditch Road, Bromsgrove B60 4JR), runs tutored/ non-tutored classes in Art, Textiles, Ceramics, Embroidery and Dance. Contact AAS on 01527 833829 or avoncroftarts@btconnect.com

ALVECHURCH Art Group meets at the Baptist Hall (rear of church) every Tues from 1–3.30pm, using all mediums except oil. All welcome, especially beginners. Friendly tuition. Call Paul on 0121 445 5437 or drop in.

ALVECHURCH Library Readers Group meets in the library on the last Tues of the month from 2pm–3.30pm. New members always welcome. And don't forget that you can access online audio and e-books 24/7, free of charge, by downloading the Borrowbox app. Visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries

LICKEY HILLS ART SOCIETY, a friendly bunch of artists and those interested in art, meet at Longbridge Methodist Church, Bristol Road, B45 9TY, on the first Sat each month at 7.30pm. Open to artists and non-artists alike. For more info email Lyn lyndasharp2010@yahoo.com or come along – the members would love to see you.

BARNT GREEN ART CLUB meets at Barnt Green Scout and Guide HQ in Blackwell Road, Barnt Green. Tuesday morning and Tuesday afternoon sessions. Workshops with visiting tutors during each term. There is a waiting list, but enquiries from improvers and intermediate artists welcomed. Jackie: 0121 445 4745.

GARDENS & FLOWERS

BLACKWELL Community Garden in the grounds of St Catherine, Blackwell. Pop along to help water, plant and harvest. Info on 0121 445 1425.

ROWNEY GREEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY meets at the Village Hall on the second Thursday of each month at 7.15pm. On 8th September we welcome a new speaker – Catarina Fenton, Head of the Heritage Seed Library managing the national collection of around 800 heritage vegetable varieties. The

continues overleaf

from previous page

HSL supports communities to share, grow and save seed through training, events, and partnership projects. Catarina has worked for Garden Organic for the last eleven years and her previous roles have involved food growing programmes in schools and other communities. Catarina is passionate about the role the Heritage Seed Library has to play in both conserving varieties and promoting seed saving skills. Guests are always welcome £3.50 including refreshment. For more information please contact Lindsay Smith on 01527 592874.

DODFORD Gardening Club meets on the 2nd Monday each month (except August) usually in Dodford Village Hall at 7.45pm. New members and visitors welcome. More info at www.dodfordgardeningclub.co.uk or call Penny on 07706 153618.

ROWNEY GREEN Flower Club, held at the Hall: You don't have to be a flower arranger to enjoy the friendly company of our members, while watching beautiful flowers being transformed into an amazing arrangement. The next meeting of the Rowney Green Flower Club will be on Thursday 22 September at 7.30pm. The demonstrator is Tina Miles, from Oasis Flowers & Balloons, Barnt Green.
There is the opportunity to buy raffle tickets, which could win you one of these wonderful displays to take home. All are welcome and entry for guests is only £3.50 which includes tea/coffee and biscuits. For more info contact Felicity on 07812 336263

BROMSGROVE FLOWER CLUB holds regular monthly meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month except in December when it is the 2nd Thursday. No meeting in January. Meets at 2pm, at All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove B601AF.

A yearly membership is available or come as a visitor & dip in & out. Refreshments & then a demonstration of flower arrangements and a raffle and you may be lucky and take one home. Further information on 0121 445 1915.

SOLIHULL & District Orchid Society meets on the 1st Sat each month at St George & St Teresa's Parish Centre, Station Road, Dorridge B39 8EZ. New members and visitors welcome, and members are always willing to offer help or advice. For more information or advice you can call Monica Johnson on 01926 747822 or email at kenneth.johnson99@ntlworld.com. You can also visit www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk to see more.

HELP & ADVICE

POPPIES' is a monthly bereavement support group — contact Rev Sheri Gidney on 0121 445 1185 for details.
DIVORCED/separated and having trouble seeing your children? Being excluded from their lives? The Association for Shared Parenting has been helping mums and dads in the family court system and problems over contact and residence for over 20 years. Visit www.associationforsharedparenting.org.uk

REPAIR CAFE is for those looking to save their money and fix broken or faulty household items.The Repair Cafe is part of an international network that keeps faulty appliances and clothes out of landfill and offers 'a cuppa' and a slice of cake to visitors while they wait. Visit the Repair Shop on the first Saturday of every month 2-5pm at All Saints Hall, Burcot Lane, B60 1AD.

For more info: 07804251731 or repaircafebromsgrove@gmail.com

ALVECHURCH Library hosts one-to-one Computer Sessions for people wanting to learn the basics. If you need help with emails or advice on surfing online then pop in to arrange for free tuition, provided by volunteers. They can also help with online applications for Blue Badges and bus passes. For more info call The Hub on 01905 822722 and ask for Alvechurch Library.

ALVECHURCH BAPTIST CHURCH will be hosting a lunch for carers and for those for whom they care on 12th October at 12.00. This will be a time for enjoying food and making friends, learning of opportunities and listening to concerns. A representative from Worcestershire Carers will be present to help with any questions.

If you would like to come on the 12th please ring either 07917 108934 or 0121 447 7369 or e-mail dlshoesmith@yahoo.co.uk

GUIDE DOGS are currently looking for volunteers in the community who could give a couple of hours of their time to regularly help someone locally and living with sight loss, get out and about.
Volunteer sighted guides support the person they are partnered with to feel part of the community. This could be grabbing a coffee, visiting a local attraction or simply getting some fresh air. No previous experience is necessary, full training will be provided and the role is extremely flexible! For more information email MidlandsMSG@guidedogs.org.uk or visit www.guidedogs.org.uk

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

FINSTALL Cross WI meets at Finstall Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. For more info see www.finstallcrosswi.wordpress.com or email finstallcrosswi@gmail.com

BEOLEY WI meets on the first Tuesday of each month in Beoley Village Hall at 7.00pm. More info from Joan Lovett on 01527 584047 or email beoleysec@wfedwi.org.uk

BENTLEY Pauncefoot WI meets at 7.30pm on the second Tues every month at Bentley Village Hall (B97 5TB). More information from Helen Spence on 01527 822611 or email bentleypauncefootsec@wfedwi.org.uk

BARNT Green WI meets at the Baptist Church at 7.30pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. For more information: Jenny Jellie 07983 865372.

BROMSGROVE Belles WI meets on the second Monday each month at the Meeting Room at St Godwald's Church at 7.30pm. For more info, contact President Helen Holbeche at helenholbeche@gmail.com

ALVECHURCH WI meets on the second Monday each month in Alvechurch Village Hall, at 7.30pm. For more information email Mariea Clarke clarke.mariea@gmail.com or alvechurchpres@wfedwi.org.uk

LICKEY WI usually meets on the first Tues every month at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall (Trinity Centre), Old Birmingham Road, Lickey. More info from Jenny Ryder on 0121 445 1872, Lickeywi@gmail.com or www.lickeywi.wordpress.com

HILLSIDE at Alvechurch WI meets at 7.45 pm on the first Weds each month at The Ark, Alvechurch. For more info call Pat McDonagh on 0121 628 4121.

BLACKWELL & Burcot WI meets at Burcot Village Hall on the second Weds each month, at 2pm. For info call President Mrs Barbara Knight on 0121 445 3456.

FINSTALL & Cofton Hackett WI meets on the first Monday of the month at Finstall Village Hall at 2pm. For more info call President Val Wheeler on 01527 874518.

HOPWOOD WI meets at Hopwood Village Hall on the first Thurs of the month at 7.30pm. For more information call Ann Thurrell on 0121 447 7668.

ST CATHERINE'S BLACKWELL WI meets on the 4th Wednesday each month at 7.30pm at Burcot Village Hall. Contact Sue Barrett for more information on 01527 596092 or susanbarratt222@gmail.com

RUBERY WI meets on the 2nd Weds of the month at 7.30pm at Beacon Church Centre, Whetty Lane, when there are speakers, activities and competitions. The 4th Weds of each month is the craft evening. Non-members are welcome. Anyone can just drop in on either night. Contact Judie1055@yahoo.co.uk 07810765314.

FEATURE IN WHAT'S ON

The deadline for What's On submissions for the October issue is September 16th. info@villageonline.co.uk

Above: Action from Alvechurch FC's season-opener against Stourbridge. ***Pictures/ Ian Macvie***

Opening day drama

Alvechurch take the points but players hurt in clash of heads.

Alvechurch FC won their opening day tie against local rivals Stourbridge, but celebrations were muted after the game was halted for 48 minutes by a sickening clash of heads between two home players.

The encounters between these two sides are rarely without incident, and this was to be no different.

The first flashpoint came on 14 minutes when Stourbridge's Styche was cautioned for a late challenge on Carter right in front of the dugouts, which rapidly emptied in protest.

A big turning point just two minutes from the break however, when the visitors were reduced to ten men when Styche saw a second yellow and consequently a red for simulation as he tussled with keeper Phillips deep in the Church box.

The first half had promised much, but produced a stalemate. With 11 men against ten, the second looked to be a different ball game.

But just two minutes in, the game was thrown into chaos when Church players Harry Williams and Jack Hallahan came together with a sickening clash of heads about 25 yards out from the Church goal.

Quick reactions from the referee and players near the scene ensured that the two prostrate players were taken care of before the medical help arrived.

Although Williams was able to walk to the dressing room after around ten minutes of treatment, Hallahan's departure was much more delayed and was on a stretcher to a waiting ambulance. The game resumed after a delay of nearly 50 minutes, with Willets and Taylor replacing the stricken players on the pitch.

It was uncertain how the game would play out from that point, but Church looked to give no quarter in seeing the game out against their ten-men opponents.

Forty five minutes, and three classy goals later, Church had asserted themselves against their beleaguered opponents, and secured three deserved points to kick start the season on day one.

It could have been four late on as Church showed no sign of letting up. Waldron almost capitalised on a weak backpass, but his shot curled just wide with Price in no man's land.

AFC FIXTURES

League matches unless stated.

SEPTEMBER

3rd FA Cup 1st qualifying round TBA
10th Royston Town (a) 3.00
13t Hednesford Town (h) 19.45
17th FA Cup 2nd qualifyinground TBA
24th Leiston (h) 3.00
27th Nuneaton Borough (a) 19.45

OCTOBER

1st St Ives Town (a) 3.00
8th FA Trophy 3rd qualifying TBA
11th Mickleover (h) 19.45
15th Stratford Town (h) 3.00
22nd Kings Langley (a) 3.00
25th Bedford Town (a) 19.45
29th Ilkeston Town (h) 3.00

An extra Edge

Alvechurch have welcomed experienced box-to-box midfielder Tom Edge to Lye Meadow.

Tom started his football career at Walsall academy, before graduating from Campbellsville University in Kentucky, having made 100 appearances for the university.

On returning to England he has played for Telford United and Leek Town.

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*Until 30.9.22
T&Cs apply.